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THE MONTH

JANUARY 1955

CELL 23—SHANGHAI

ANDRÉ BONNICHON

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CELL 23—SHANGHAI¹

By
ANDRÉ BONNICHON

WE HAVE JUST ONE SOLITARY BULB set near the ceiling in a little window at the top of the dividing-wall to light these two sections of our teeming hive. As I open my eyes I become aware of myself outstretched under a tattered blanket, and my awareness includes fourteen other prostrate figures, parked out over the wooden floor. The whole of this floor is exactly portioned out. Each one of us is entitled to a space of four floorboards. As I look round I can sort out familiar faces: the student, the peasant, the Protestant, the man from Formosa; not, of course, that we ourselves use such terms. We are mere numbers. Each is his number, and otherwise anonymous. As there is no stir I wonder whether they all are still asleep or whether they have, like me, come back to consciousness and begun their day by waiting for the day to begin.

I can't tell the time. No one here has a watch. The dark patch of sky lying beyond the nine blackened window-bars shows no trace of dawn. The hatch in our cell-door is still open. It always is at night. Once it is closed we know it must be near the time to get up. I am at Shanghai in cell 23 on the second storey of the Neveu prison. It is the spring of 1954. I am a French missionary, or, should I say, I was. Now I am simply Number 1207. Our cell is unfurnished—not a bed or table or chair in it. Our scanty bundles of clothing are piled up in the corner next to the toilet-tub; our enamel mugs lie in a row by the door.

Having taken stock of this cramped universe of mine, I allow the orderly habits of a lifetime to assert themselves. There will be plenty of time later in which to fold the blankets and to deal with all that is matter of fact. My first need is to rise above it,

¹ This is a first-hand account of what goes on in a Chinese Communist prison. Père André Bonnichon, S.J., went out to China as a missionary in 1931. He was then twenty-nine years of age. When the Communists took over Shanghai he was Dean of the Law Faculty in the Aurora University. He was arrested and thrown into prison on 15 June 1953 and was set free and expelled from China on 22 April 1954. The above article is published through the courtesy of *Études*, and has been translated by Fr. L. E. Bellanti.

and so give some sense to this cramped world within these four walls, since I have to believe there is some sense in it. "Take, O Lord, my liberty. It is still mine for all the walls that shut me in. You have given it me. To You I restore it; for You will not annihilate it, as they are trying to do here, but will transform it by taking it up into Yours—that Will of Eternal Love and unceasing desire for man's salvation, symbolized by 'the Heart on fire.'" My fragment of prayer is checked as a prisoner steps over me, *en route* for the "gentlemen." Apart from this recourse to God, all I see is unutterably dull and depressing: the meaningless smudges on the wall, the familiar knots in the plank flooring, the futile observances of this long and empty day that lies before me: so desperately like the days that have been and that are yet to be. I am Number 1207: the only priest, the only Catholic, the only European in the company of fourteen Chinese. It looks as if I am forgotten here. My judges haven't had a word to say to me for six months; they are leaving me here to go, slowly and surely, to rot. My previous life has receded from me and passed beyond recall: it has swept by like some ocean liner, leaving me behind it: a desperate survivor clinging to a raft. My instinct urges me to find a foothold somewhere, some ground of hope, something to fasten on to, but there doesn't seem to be even a straw to clutch. Very well then, "Give me your Love and I am rich enough"—I borrow my hero's words—"Your Love is all I need!"

Wouldn't these fellows here laugh if they heard what I am saying? Number 1112, whose head is uncomfortably close to mine, only the other day looked me over and summed me up with infinite sarcasm: "You," he said, "and all your spoof about an invisible world!" He finds it baffling that a man who has enjoyed such opportunities as I have should show such utter want of sense. He, it would seem, stands squarely by the ancient wisdom of his people, now that it has been irrigated by the up-to-date findings of "science." He whole-heartedly accepts the doctrines of our one and only master—the government—which keeps him and me, all of us, shut in here! So be it. Yet it is only this senseless folly in me that can lend any meaning to each day: the folly of the Crucified who wills us to be like Him and fruit of His Sacrifice. The conclusion is plain: if His Love really is all I need, I should consider myself highly favoured in being left here, stripped of all.

Four long, ear-splitting whistles scream through the corridors. It's our gentle reveille at 5.30 a.m. The cell at once comes to life. The Numbers turn over and sit up and rub their eyes and exchange the latest news: who it was that snored, who had a nightmare, who had to go to the tub in the corner, and so on. We also must make sure what day it is. The majority decide it's Thursday.

On this supposition each of us works out his bit of arithmetic: three months, six months here. . . . To myself I say: "Ten months already gone and possibly ten, twenty, thirty more to come. There's no telling." My neighbour, hunched up beside me and seeking distraction, breaks in with a question. "Are there any savages left in France?" I assure him there aren't. "Not even in the mountains? . . . You see in China we still have some Iniao and Lолос left, etc." This good fellow, Number 1052, has taken a liking to me. I've learnt, bit by bit, how he served for five years as an unpaid apprentice in a motor-garage, specialized on accumulators, and got on so well that he even became a proprietor some years before "the liberation." This is the accepted term for the seizure of power by the Communists. He is now thirty and can read and write, but apart from his predilection for machinery his ignorance is amazing. He honestly believed that the Yang-tse-kiang was an artificial canal, and it needed other assurances besides mine to convince him that this great waterway had been "made by the sky." He's been here for over a year, and has thoroughly mastered the political jargon, so that in and out of season he keeps intoning the rigmarole about "American imperialism: sole obstacle to world peace," . . . such imperialism, be it noted, being confined to the guilty lackeys of Wall Street who batten on the long-suffering proletariat of the States. It wouldn't be fair to draw him on beyond such ready-made formulae. He is a well-meaning soul, and, for all his ignorance, very sensitive. When the day comes for me to leave Cell 23 my last and kindest glance will be reserved for Number 1052.

In spite of our cramped quarters—roughly twenty feet by ten—some of the fifteen inmates feel the need of physical jerks. We squeeze up as much as we can to make room for them. From their childhood the Chinese have learnt to adapt themselves to cramped conditions—their cheek-by-jowl life develops the virtues of patience and mutual tolerance and habitual self-

control. My twenty-five years among them have, if possible, increased my admiration for the fine qualities of this people.

As soon as the door opens we file off quickly to the washing-room at the end of the corridor. With only six or seven places there, we have to wait for our turn. Soap may not be used. You just dip your towel in the trough and pass it over your face and hands. There's a time allowance of two minutes and no more for all the fifteen of us, since twenty-eight other cells on this floor have to get through their ablutions in the course of the hour. We come and go back to our cell with the bowed heads of sentenced criminals, though no one has been condemned. The Communist technique sets much store on the outward sign. By subjecting the body to the posture of guilt, the spirit is also moulded and brought into a responsiveness indistinguishable from that of domestic animals. That's what's wanted of everyone in the Communist régime. But why does my good friend, Number 1052, bend down lower than the rest, and outdo all by the exaggerated abjection of his posture? It hurts me every time I see this. The line I have adopted is "submissively nonconformist." I keep my eyes cast down like a nun, so that it's impossible to accuse me of breaking the rules by looking about. But I simply won't bow my head. Yet, apart from an occasional "telling-off," I have been left alone in my obstinacy.

On our way back to the cell we carry water in our bowls and wash our teeth in this. Number 1278 circles round us—an unfailing rite of his—examining our toothpaste and tooth-brushes, and so refreshing his memories of the enchanting realms of "exchange and mart." He knows the brand and price of every article, and his memory for details and figures and his keenness in looking out for a possible bargain is amazing. He came, he tells me, from a peasant family who couldn't afford to send him to school. Yet when "the liberation" came his family was promoted to a middle-class status (*tchong-nong*), a favourite method of the authorities for defrauding the poor of their property. He himself had migrated to the town quite early in life, and had during the protracted war-years made a living by buying and selling and using his wits. He confesses quite candidly that his bargains hadn't all come off, and that he had had terms of imprisonment in the past. Politeness prevents us from making further inquiries. Number 1278 has in fact no sense whatever of

commercial morality. For him, business is just a war of wits. Yet he has likeable qualities and loves his family, and the thought of their being in want is a torture to him. In speech and behaviour he seems to be the thoroughly confirmed and convinced Communist, but I now think that there are unsounded depths. . . . In spite of his egoism, he has his pleasant whimsies, does a good turn when it suits him, and exercises a charm of which he is only too well aware. Everyone seems to like him. He has personality. He refuses to be crushed or ignored, and persistently draws attention to himself—mine no less than that of others, whether I want or not.

Once daylight comes our light is switched off. The first duty in each cell is that of washing the floor. Two of us in turn deal with one-half of it, and two from the other end with their half, swabbing and brushing, while the rest of us huddle together and remove ourselves and whatever else is in their way. When this is over I am free to sit on my folded blanket against the wall with my elbows on my knees and my head in my hands. They all leave me alone for they understand that when I adopt this attitude I simply want to pray.

Theoretically, silence is supposed to reign in each cell. No talking is allowed before 5 p.m., when the group-discussion on politics is launched and each victim of the régime goes all out to hymn its praises. In practice, however, apart from occasional reminders, the rule of silence is not enforced. So, once the heaviness of sleep has worn off, my companions enter into subdued conversation, comparing and contrasting the present with the past. This might be interesting if only they would cease from reverting mechanically to the obsessive topic imposed on us by the authorities: how best to accuse ourselves, how to prove the sincerity of our self-accusation, how to reform our "thinking." Practically all our instruction through the loud-speaker is confined to this topic. We are in prison to be educated. As soon as we have proved our sincerity, the clemency of "the government" will be extended to us. How sick and tired I get of this monotonous reiteration of stock phrases and formulae. There's no way of escaping this persistent hammering of mind and spirit. . . .

A clatter outside announces the arrival of our "hot water." It's our drink, served out at meal-times at 7, 11, and 5 p.m. each day. Following the Chinese fashion we do not drink at meals.

Hence each one's bowl serves the dual purpose of cup at drinking-times and plate at meal-times. Our waiters are prisoners sentenced to undergo "reform through labour." Such labour may have to be carried out in prison instead of in the fields. These men are confined at night in cells like the rest of us, but in the day-time they have the run of the prison: working in the kitchen, acting as cleaners, serving meals, washing up, and so on. There's an absolute veto on the exchange of even a single word with them. Our warders see to this effectively. These prison-warders in their military uniform and white woollen gloves constitute the aristocracy of the police in our police-state. No menial prison tasks for them! They all look well set, well turned out and well fed—and we steal a glance at the lordly fellows as they casually smoke those priceless cigarettes once to be had for the asking but now belonging to the dreams of a vanished age! Well may they be happy! They deserve to be in clover. Their "thinking" is good—it's that of "the government." Ours, alas! is bad. Isn't it our "bad thinking" that has brought and keeps us here? . . . These are the basic axioms of prison-life. They are dinned into us day after day and have become self-evident truths to everyone here—except me. . . . Our "hot water" is improved by seasoning with a pinch of salt drawn from the salt ration doled out to us. My mates here are astonished and amused at the amount of salt I use and twit me about it. "1207 thrives on sea-water." So they say and smile at me as I sip my drink.

The seven o'clock whistle gives the signal for "exercise." At once we form up in single file and begin slowly marching round our cell. There's a whole hour of it before us, without any change of direction or even a chance of stealing a momentary peep through the hatch in the door from which our warder can keep an eye on us. The pace is too slow for my liking, and though our depressing file of fifteen spaces itself out as much as possible, we can't help treading on one another's heels. . . . On we go, round and round, eyes cast down, hands in pockets (for the trousered ones) or buried in loose sleeves, our elliptical course covered in twenty-four paces. In every storey of the prison as in all the thirty cells of our storey it's just the same. Above and below us, to right and left, men whose "thinking is bad" are all going round and round like squirrels in a cage. Now that Communism reigns throughout the vast spaces of China, in hundreds of

prisons this same mechanical treatment is being served out. Well may the "Asiatic Asmodeus" feed his gaze on us, and on the countless prisoners who are integral to the Communist system! To this system we are geared and we function as its fly-wheel and conveyor-belt. We prisoners are essential to it. Without us it couldn't survive. . . .

During this daily promenade it's quite easy to hold a conversation—one merely has to edge up to the shoulder of the man in front. Of course, all talking is forbidden, and occasionally the warder calls a too obvious chatteringer to the hatch. "What were you taking about?" he asks, comparing your reply with that of your companion, to see how you tally. Then comes the scolding like that of the school-ma'am to the naughty child. "How dare you! Don't you know that it's not allowed . . . that you are disobeying 'the government'? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Do you want to be left in prison for the rest of your life? You are here to be educated. What's the sense of carrying on like this?" etc. Humbly and with bowed head you listen to it all. Such scoldings are trivial by comparison with the sanctions in my first prison in which you might for a whisper or a grin be kept standing stiff at attention for a full half-hour. . . . It took me quite a time to discover what lay behind this relaxation of discipline in our cell. Such conversations give "the accredited informer" his opportunity. I instinctively look round to see where he is and find him profitably engaged in questioning a newcomer.

My suspicions were aroused very soon after my introduction into Cell 23. Number 19064—an ex-journalist, though he claims he was in business, confined here for the last two and a half years —had taken me far too swiftly to his heart. We might have been long-lost brothers! He admired the lucidity of my mind, my felicity of phrasing, and found my conversation just fascinating! He insisted with all and sundry that the bumps on my cranium furnished additional proof of my intelligence! He deluged me with astonishingly searching and indeed impudent questions. To begin with I took it all as the outcome of his garrulous nature, coupled with morbid curiosity and a total lack of breeding and education—but I realized my mistake soon enough. I would have to measure my words as carefully with him as I would if I were in court, for all I said would without fail be passed on to our judges. "What was the happiest event in my life?" "My

ordination as a priest." I made this reply, to let him see that there would be no truckling on religious matters. "What was my worst experience?" "My arrest." In contrast with my fellow-prisoners, who kept blessing "the government" day and night for having thrown them into jail, I was determined to proclaim myself a victim of the Communist régime. Moreover, Number 19064, for all his assumed *naïveté*, gave himself away. He let me see he knew more about me than I had told him. In a flash I realized that he had been told about me by the judge or the political supervisor, and was their stool-pigeon. "Did I think I'd be long in prison?" What he wanted was to find out whether I had made up my mind to make a confession of imaginary crimes or to persevere in my obstinacy. All I said to him was what I had already said to the judge: "How am I to tell? I am innocent. I can't do what is suggested in order to get out. I can't accuse myself or my fellow-missionaries or the Catholic Church of imperialism, political conspiracy, spying and all that."

Number 19064 left our cell after two months, to be succeeded by Number 1112 as the official "spider." Number 1112 is as fluent as his predecessor, but not as adept in giving us the rough edge of his tongue. He has the unctuous manner and affected voice of the stage-parson, and we get the full benefit of it in the evenings when he takes the chair at the political discussion. At the moment he is promenading and having his *tête-à-tête* with 1452, dosing him, presumably, with the usual prescription: "All the government wants is our good—it misses no opportunity of showing this. Did you notice how we all got meat yesterday?" (We did; and each ration could have been wrapped up in a postage stamp!) "We are here to be educated—we have forfeited the privilege of free citizens—we've done the people harm. Now we must work our passage back by humble confession and submission. Admit your crimes—get your brain washed, and you'll soon discover how generous the government can be. I'm telling you all this for your good, and because it is the only way for you to get back to your wife and children. You can't give better proof of your conversion and of the sincerity of your confessions than by adding a full list of your accomplices in the past, or, at least, of all the 'reactionaries' you know. It's easily done. I'll provide you with the accusation-forms. I could give you a tip or two over your own confession.

Just open your mind to me. Don't be a fool and keep anything back. It doesn't work. In fact there's nothing the government doesn't already know." As we keep going round and round our friend goes on and on with his pious and pressing litany of solicitation. . . . "What about yourself? Why are you still here after nine months if it's so easy to get out?" None dares to put such a question to him. Anyhow he would have a full and ready answer. "In the government's eyes I still lack sincerity. I know I do." (Never did he utter a truer word!) "It's all my fault. I haven't yet completely overcome the spirit of reaction; so I'm willing to stay here as long as the government sees good."

It's quite a time since 1112 gave up trying to make a good Communist out of me. My friend the student, Number 1426, shortly after his arrival begged me to give him a French lesson at this period. But our jailer won't have it, and he has, for some weeks past, forbidden me to converse with others at this time. It would only bring them under suspicion and hurt them if I tried. Indeed, I prefer keeping silence, for this matutinal merry-go-round within our four walls can be devoted to the Canon of the Mass in which I unite myself to the Masses that are being said all over the world, and I can time my slow march to the solemn movement of the Liturgy. My companions, earth-bound creatures, are indeed imprisoned. It's their boast that they are, one and all, clods of animated matter, and that this cell of ours confines every atom of their being. I'm the lucky one! All I need is the spiritual leap by which I present myself before my Heavenly Father, whose eye is on me day and night. *Te igitur, clementissime Pater.* A warm consciousness pervades me through and through, uniting me to the Body of Christ which is the Church, and to all my brethren in religion. My relegation to this cell here and my captivity (with its hint of the night of the Passion) far from expressing separation, feeds this profound and consoling sense of union. Could anything be more futile than the mechanical gyration of these men around me, shut out as they are from faith and hope? For me, in contrast, every round takes me round the world, in the Sacrifice of the Church for the benefit of the Church (*pro Ecclesia Catholica*), offered on countless altars, for "the salvation of the whole world." Each of my footsteps on this wooden floor leaves its impress on eternity.

So we go round and round, without a halt. Poor 1091, the

Formosan, has to drop out. He's been here for two years and has been visibly declining of late. He sinks into a corner to be out of the way, and shuts his eyes—all the same he will have to get up and go on again in a few minutes. This isn't a hospital run by nuns.

Memento Domine . . . remember, Lord, those I love—those bound to me by bonds which no power on earth can sever. So many of them are in this town—so near and yet so far. I was living for them, and You gave them to me, and, for all I know, they are suffering because of me, grape-clusters of the heroic Church of China which You are crushing in the wine-press. I give You their names as I named them at their baptism: John, Francis . . . and my ex-pupils . . . and my catechumens. For them this day I drain the cup to its dregs.

On I go round, reading the big print in black and red, as if the Missal itself lay open before me and come to "*the day before He suffered*," when "He took bread," and I unite my offering with His . . . and see how the many offerings are the One and Only Offering of the Heart of God-made-man—its flame reaching from earth to heaven and catching the little spark of me and my non-entity in the huge conflagration of Love.

I come to earth with a jolt. "1207, how much rice for you?" "Nine-tenths of the ration as usual, with the other tenth for 1148." Before each meal we have to give the exact amount of bowls and half-bowls of rice to be sent in through the hatch, so that all may be consumed and the bowls sent back empty. In our prison each bowl holds three modest portions of rice. Through the open hatch a bunch of thirty chopsticks is inserted, and as we do our last lap round the cell each takes a couple of them. The whistle signals the end. We get to our places and sit down. I can't help noticing a strange stiffness in my joints. I have aged very rapidly—the lack of vitamins shows up in no time. At 8 a.m. we have the first of our two daily meals. First come four oblong aluminium pie-dishes, full of boiled turnips and little lumps of tean-fou (a flour made of crushed and fermented beans) all afloat in mush. The contents, solid and liquid, are divided into fifteen exactly equal portions—each one's bowl holds the equivalent of two small turnips which have been sliced into roundlets—and this portion with its mush and water would in our reckoning fill half a soup-plate. It's all we have to help the rice down.

Next comes the serving of rice, boiled *à la Chinoise* without salt or condiment of any kind. Again all is most fairly portioned out. I can hardly remember in the last ten months a single complaint of unfair treatment from any of my fellow-prisoners. Would it be possible to say the same of fifteen European prisoners of similar antecedents in similar conditions? This self-control is chiefly due to the habitual self-control developed in them by their group-life in their homes. It really is admirable. But one can't exclude in a Communist prison like ours the duty of silent submission which is an essential element in the "reformation of our thinking," and just as essential if we hope some day to get out.

For our meals we squat cross-legged against the wall, our knees touching, the floor serving as a table for our vegetable bowls. Each holds the aluminium rice-bowl in his left hand and plies the chopsticks with his right. The silence of absorption rules us all as we concentrate on this supremely important function of stoking-up. I remember one of these men telling me: "When my belly is full I feel less anxious about my family." We are so tightly packed that we keep bumping one another with our elbows as we deal with our rice. They dispose of it in a twinkling. To begin with I could hardly swallow the stuff. The rice was dry and tasteless and there was so little to mix it with and, worst of all, nothing to help to wash it down—but, needs must . . . and now, though not an adept, I manage well enough and suffer less from hunger than I did. Once or twice a week they enrich our vegetables with chopped meat—enough to provide a few mouthfuls for each one. We learn of this repast from the announcement at the hatch: "Does anyone here object to pork?" The government takes particular care not to hurt Moslem susceptibilities—for in some provinces Moslems are numerous and influential—and employs this formula to advertise its respect for every kind of religious observance. The repast takes less than a quarter of an hour. Then the wooden floor which serves as table, bed, gymnasium and laundry is carefully swept and swabbed. The empty bowls are returned through the hatch; two of us wash all the mugs in cold water and wipe them up with rice-paper—a euphemism for toilet-paper, which is one of the few gifts we are allowed to receive and which serves as handkerchief, towel, etc. After meals we are allowed to stand or sit. I like to get on my

feet and move about as much as I can, taking care not to disturb my companions.

With the nine o'clock whistle you have to "sit in silence and examine your conscience." This is enjoined on all for the next three hours. Each of us settles on his folded blanket with his back to the wall. (In my first prison at Lokawè, we had to sit on the bare floor for fifteen of the twenty-four hours of the day.) In winter the bare wall brought on rheumatism in one's back and shoulders: in summer, when we are stripped to the waist and bathed in sweat, we take it out of the wall in layers of dirty paint which clings to our backs! Sitting, as we have to, so close together, we take up all the wall space of our cell, with just enough room left over for our bundles and the toilet-tub at one end, while, at the other, our mugs and two slop-buckets for dirty water are placed near the door.

I take a look round and sum up my impressions. Only one or two are senior to me in this cell. I can recall the arrival of most of them, stunned by their arrest in the open street hardly an hour before, sobbing convulsively and weeping without shame for days on end, then slowly and sadly reconciling themselves to the routine of prison-life. It's been painfully interesting to see how quickly they have adapted themselves to the psychological treatment which constitutes the essence of our "re-education." How full they now are of self-accusation! How eager to wallow and writhe and drag themselves through the mud! They seize on almost any pretext for blessing and praising the government in the most nauseatingly fulsome terms. Mine is the one discordant voice in this symphony of adulation. A few days after my arrival as I was quite honestly and simply expressing my opinion at the evening political discussion, Number 1052 asked me: "But aren't you a Communist?" I had to reply: "I am not" (in Chinese one says: "I do not believe in Communism"). Stupefaction could be read on every countenance. They all held their breath waiting for the clap of thunder after the lightning-flash! Incredible that there should be a victim of the régime who openly dares to defy it! Not a word more was said. My lunacy, whether as a foreigner or as a Catholic, could after all harm no one but myself. I could also see that their pity was not unmixed with contempt.

In such circumstances one gets to know one's neighbours almost too intimately. I see in these men all the virtues of the

people of China, their courage, their patience, their respect and deference for others, their understanding and acceptance of our human lot. I admire this combination of natural virtues which, more than anything else, makes our life here endurable. But I also see how easy it is for the firm hand of doctrinaire Communism to fashion and shape this clay and to mould it to its heart's desire. Their only chance of getting out of here is by "the reformation of their thinking." They have to become Communists at heart or at least in speech. Their wives and children are starving in their absence. The only way to save their nearest and dearest is by accusing their neighbours and acquaintances. This prison-discipline will completely "depersonalize" them. They will be only too ready to say and think exactly as the government wishes. They even boast about it now, and are convinced that no other attitude makes sense. The persistent inculcation of this discipline in each of the countless prisons all over the country extends far beyond the prison walls. Those who still go free have relations or friends in prison and never are free from the salutary fear of arrest. Let there be the least suspicion that their "thinking" is bad and the plague of spies that poisons life at every level—in factory, school, shop, and in the home-circle itself—will soon land them where it has stranded us. Our prisons are most potent centres of Communist re-education. Their influence spreads far beyond our walls, and forms the minds and hearts of untold millions.

Take the case of Number 1390—an illiterate rustic, who somehow managed to build up a small business in Shanghai. He employed about a dozen men in his workshop making belts for machinery. On his first coming here he had the temerity to say that under the new régime it was impossible to support a wife and family! Such indiscretions belong to the past. He no longer makes any reference to his home and family, but begs the rest to tell him whether he now ought to incriminate one of his friends. The others, one and all, egg him on to do so. As he can't write or fill forms he was on tenterhooks till he at last got the opportunity of making a viva-voce accusation. It has naturally been very hard for him to make head or tail of our political discussion on "the Social Industrialization of China." To this simple fellow the abstract terms of economics don't make sense. They have tried to simplify them for him. "Don't you see? There were no

machines in the old days . . . now we have machines . . . For these machines we need steel," etc. Now, given a chance, he trots out with amazing conviction the tale of the government's developments: "We have iron mines and copper mines, and, best of all, *steel mines!*" A friendly smile rewards his lecture.

(*To be concluded.*)

NURSERY CAROL

I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing By

By

BARBARA ROCHFORD

I

I SAW a ship with satin sails
And masts of solid gold;
There were comforts in the cabin
And apples in the hold.

And on the deck the captain stood
And called for all to hear,
"Oh men and women of the world,
Oh monied men, come here!"

"Behold the halls and marble pools
And decks for your delight
A-hung with flowers and flags by day
And fairy-lights by night!

"Come listen to the melodies
That woo you without cease;
Or in the cushioned cabins play
With love, or take your ease!"

"My table serves a royal fare,
 My cellars, lyric wine.
There's nothing in the earth or sky—
Nothing that mighty gold can buy
 Lacks from this ship of mine."

"Captain," I said, "Oh captain,
 Where does your fine ship go?"
But like a wistful child he sighed
 "Alas, I do not know."

2

I saw a great grey battleship
 With masts of flaring steel.
She smote the wind, and carved the sea
 That cowered at her keel.

And on the deck the captain stood
 And called for all to hear,
"Oh men of spirit, modern men,
 Oh brave, new men, come here!"

"No more shall false allegiances
 Enslave you, as of old;
For they that clasped the ancient creeds
 Lie fettered in the hold.

"Their wives have no more eyes to weep,
 Their babes, no light to see;
And they shall envy skeletons
 That rattle in the sea.

"But all the rest with single hand
 Shall man the decks along;
And from their single heart shall surge
 A dedicated song.

"Tireless and proud their toil shall be,
Holy their fellowship;
And even in their yearning dreams
Nought see they but the ship."

"Oh iron captain," questioned I,
"Where does your journey end?"
He said, "There is no more to seek:
The ship is all, my friend."

3

I saw a ship, a little ship
Sail like the crescent moon;
And at the helm there sat a girl
Singing a cradle tune.

But though she lulled a tiny child
Great was her majesty.
And all the flowers, and all the stars
Were not as fair as she.

Oh keep your grimness and your gold
For right across the sky
We'll sail until we reach the land
She, and the Child, and I.

For wealth is dry and men must die,
But still our day is dawning—
I saw a ship come sailing by
On Christmas Day in the morning!

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

By
REGINALD J. DINGLE

ALITERARY TREATMENT of "The Saints and Ourselves" suffers in a special degree from the defect of most of the literature of personal experience. These who have most to tell us are the least disposed, perhaps the least able, to tell it. The doctrine of the Communion of Saints has become a part of daily life in some communities within the Catholic culture, and particularly of the daily life of the unsophisticated, to a degree rare in countries severed from that culture. A man or woman of our generation, introduced to Mother Church in adult life, is unlikely without affectation to speak to the saints as familiarly as to the next door neighbour. We recite the prayers and accept the dogma, but for some of us, at any rate, if we are to be candid, the Communion of Saints looks like something not very different from the "praise of Great Men." But that appearance is deceptive. If with a few exceptions hagiology is an uninspiring branch of literature, it is impossible to study even its crudest expressions, with their accretion of pious legend and over-emphasis on the merely thaumaturgic, without feeling in a special sense that "here is the finger of God." More than in general history we are impressed by coincidences, not imposed by the biographer, something beyond the "chance collisions and quaint accidents" of the poet's vision. More too than in ordinary writings we get the feeling of parallel systems of causality. The life of any saint may be explained and interpreted in terms of a special discipline or intellectual fashion of the day, but there remain a theological interpretation and a sense of the miraculous so pervading as to make it almost possible to feel the specific and authenticated miracles rather as hindrances than as helps.

In this way, the saints collectively play a part in shaping our interpretation of the world. What of the sentiment of the individual Catholic for a particular saint which is the general subject of

this series of articles? Here I hope it is not temerarious to suggest that we are on the legitimate territory of a doctrine which outside its proper border becomes the heresy of Modernism. Whenever the plea is advanced that the deposit of faith, of which the Church is the eternal custodian, must be re-expressed or re-interpreted, according to current scientific or philosophic fashions, Authority will pronounce its anathema. "The One remains, the many change and pass." The Church until the end of this dispensation will contend for the Faith that was once delivered to the saints.

That does not mean that we can study the lives of the saints or any other branch of human history with the intellectual and emotional equipment of another age. The attempt to impose conventions of piety on the study of matters outside revealed dogma may be responsible for much of the exaggerated difficulty felt by some in accepting the faith of our fathers in the terms in which it is revealed. In selecting St. Alphonsus Liguori as the subject of this essay, I am under no obligation—I have no right—to pretend to see him in the same light as a Neapolitan of the eighteenth century, or through any eyes but my own.

So far as intimacy is concerned, I make no profession that St. Alphonsus is more actual to me than is any other character in history. The language in which the Curé d'Ars could address St. Philomena would in my case be completely unreal. St. Alphonsus, it may be said, is the saint that I "took from a printed book." The book, of course, is Newman's *Apologia*.

So much by way of prelude to a confession that I have not been led to the choice of Liguori as the subject of my contribution to this series in the spirit of the Canterbury pilgrims on their journey,

The holy blisful martir for to seeke
That them hath holpen when that they
were weeke.

Heaven knows I was *weeke* when as a young man I read Newman's *Apologia*, more fascinated as I now suspect by its prose than by its content, but my interest in Liguori so far as I can judge was intellectual. The figure of this disturbing Doctor of the Church, appearing, as I felt, somewhat incongruously in Newman's pages, haunted my imagination. I wanted to know more about him.

It was not by Newman's choice that he figured so prominently in the controversy with Kingsley. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the English convert to Catholicism was confronted with Liguori as three-quarters of a century later those attracted by the dialectics of Belloc and Chesterton had to expect the ironical query: "What about the blood of St. Januarius?" These were to the victim of "Roman fever" what Jonah and the whale had been to the fundamentalist challenged by G. W. Foote and Ingersoll.

In a lecture in the Assembly Rooms, Nottingham, on "The Tendency of Romanism to destroy man's best interests even in this world," the Rev. R. P. Blakeney, Minister of Christ Church, Claughton, Birkenhead, quoted "in proof of one of his points, *viz.*, that Romanism is immoral in its principles," several passages from the "Moral Theology of Alphonsus Liguori." The reverend gentleman or the printer slipped in his page references and was taken to task by critics. Accordingly the Reformation Society published a volume of which the title-page ran: *St. Alphonsus Liguori: or Extracts, translated from the Moral Theology of the above Romish Saint, who was canonized in the year 1839, with remarks thereon by the Rev. R. P. Blakeney, B.A.*

The book consists for the most part of parallel columns with extracts from the *Theologia Moralis* and literal English translations, interspersed with comments in which nothing less than capital letters can express the horror of the commentator. The preface to the second edition, published in 1852, describes the "Awful Disclosure" as "one of the heaviest blows which the Church of Rome has received for a long time." At the end of it, there is the solemn announcement:

CERTIFICATE

We, the undersigned, beg to state that the Latin not translated in this Volume, especially that on the Confessional, is unfit for Protestant eyes or ears, and must therefore be left in its original.

John Cumming
Thomas Hartwell Horne.

Whether Messrs. Cumming and Horne were making the over-modest assumption that the Protestant laity would not understand Latin or the too flattering one that the Catholic laity would, we need not inquire. The untranslated passages deal with matters

about as suitable for general reading as a volume of medical jurisprudence or those paper-backed editions of the *Works of Aristotle* offered to a public whose interest in the Stagirite is highly selective. Part of the indictment of the Catholic Church in the volume, it may be added, is directed to her belief that not everything should be read by everybody.

Professor Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch was later to describe the contest between Newman and Kingsley as the encounter of a very first-rate man with a very second-rate man. Blakeney is forgotten, as Kingsley would have been if theological controversy were all there had been to him. Yet, but for the Blakeneys it is unlikely that Liguori would have found his way into Newman's pages. A natural affinity can hardly be postulated. One can almost see the reluctant approach of the former Rector of Littlemore to this very un-English saint. "Neapolitan I regret to say" would not be an entirely unfair paraphrase of the plea in mitigation of some of Liguori's Marian writings.

Newman is careful to point out that "there are various schools of opinion allowed in the Church," and, dealing with the obligations of veracity, he adds: "On this point I follow others." Promising to give his opinion "as plainly as any Protestant can wish," he says: "I avow at once that in this department of morality, much as I admire the high points of the Italian character, I like the English character better." Is it unfair to say that the general reader of the *Apologia* may get the impression that its author is concerned less to explain Liguori than to explain him away? But that is not the whole of the story. If, as a moral theologian, Newman finds him in some respects unfortunate, he is clearly drawn to him as a man, even if the reason for this never emerges plainly. Not content with describing him as a holy and charitable man and a lover of truth, he adds: "whose intercession I trust I shall not lose." Such language is not used lightly by a Newman.

Yet how incomplete and misleading would be the picture of the Saint if we were dependent on what appears in the *Apologia*! Newman introduces us to that paradox which is so much of the essence of Christianity and seems in a special degree to characterize the life of Liguori. The son of a noble family, he became a Doctor of Law at the age of sixteen. Allowing for some exaggeration in the accounts of his skill as an advocate,

there is no doubt that he was launched on a brilliant career in his chosen profession. Suddenly he threw it up on discovering that in arguing a case he had overlooked an important document. Covered with confusion he left the Court with the exclamation: "World, I know you now! Courts, you shall never see me again!"

For Newman, not unnaturally, the salient point in this narrative is that "he who has the repute of being so lax a moralist had one of the most scrupulous and anxious of consciences himself." The least self-regarding of men could hardly fail to observe the resemblance to the case of Newman, who, fastidious to the frontiers of morbidity, had been denounced after the famous *Tract XC*, as little better than a confidence trickster. Other instances of this paradox come to mind. Victorian England, asked for examples of laxity and of rigorism would, I suppose, have quoted Liguori for the first and Blaise Pascal for the second. Who has not admired the advocacy of the *Provinciales*? They have done as much as anything to create the atmosphere of distrust of the Jesuits in educated English opinion. If Pascal had approached his evidence with the scrupulosity of the Neapolitan lawyer, the famous letters would never have been written or, being written, would have been torn up with the confession: "World, I know you now!" Polemical literature, let it be admitted, would have been the poorer.

Concerning Liguori, as he emerges from Newman's pages, questions crowded on the mind. What was the nature of his confusion? Was it a matter of human respect, of the *qu'en dira-t-on*? Or was it a shocked recognition of the dominance and perversity of what we should now call unconscious motives behind a mind aiming at rectitude?

With questions of this order vaguely formulated, I, who had been brought up in an extensive ignorance of the Catholic Church and its history, made a discovery that complicated the problem. A facet of Catholicism very different from that represented by the subtle lawyer and moral theologian found expression in the Redemptorist mission. Of the Redemptorists I knew little beyond the fact that I had somewhere heard them called "the Salvation Army of the Church." They stood in my mind for an emotional appeal in a totally different mental climate from that of the moral theologian who seemed to be something of

a difficulty to Newman. And then I learned that the author of the *Theologia Moralis* was the founder of the Redemptorist Order.

This discovery following immediately on the knowledge of Liguori's renunciation of the law might have caused no surprise. That the dialectician, suddenly confronted with the perils of intellectual pride, should wish to renounce the world was natural. Equally so, that he should turn to the simple folk, and wish to speak to them of death and judgment and the things to come. Aquinas, after his mighty intellectual achievement, was elevated to some mysterious experience in the light of which the works of human reason were merely straw. To what did Liguori yield in devoting himself to intellectual analysis when his own experience had been not simply of the insufficiency of intellect but of its deceitfulness and its possibilities as an occasion of sin?

The story of his life has many familiar features. The flight from the world, which is its starting point, met with all the customary frustrations. The social ambitions of a loving parent present an agonizing problem, forcing the saint to a compromise between the contemplative life and life in the world of which the Redemptorist Order will be the outcome. There is the not unfamiliar prophecy of a religious—Sister Maria Celeste—whose intuition proves sounder than the prudence of the wise. The obstacles to the fulfilment of the saint's vocation have the usual suggestion even to the casual reader of a perversity beyond the laws of chance. As so often, the mind turns to the familiar: "Satan hath desired to have you." It is not insignificant that among the obstacles some should have a character ridiculous, even grotesque. In the circumstances of the flight from the Law Courts there is enough to indicate that Liguori may have been sensitive above the average to ridicule and loss of dignity. The enemy of souls has an intuition of the vulnerable spots.

Reading these eighteenth-century records, as we are forced to do, through twentieth-century spectacles, there are features in them that we find repellent, exaggerated austerities and the like. The current analysis in terms of the psycho-somatic may seem to a future generation as artificial as eighteenth-century Neapolitan categories do to us, but we must accept our limitations and it is clear that not all the features of the story are to be interpreted in the same way. A strain of what we now call the neurotic in the saint's character is not to be denied. His biographer distin-

guishes between the three-day fast which followed the shock in the Law Courts and a subsequent expiatory fast. The nature of the malady—was it rheumatoid arthritis?—which made the closing years of Liguori's long life so painful may repay study when more is known of these matters, for psycho-pathology has its word to say even in the interpretation of saints, though not of their sainthood.

We can make no definition of the territories of the natural and the supernatural in the facts as they have been transmitted to us, but we can identify some plausible misinterpretations. The most obvious would see in Liguori the Redemptorist the triumph of Grace over nature, and in Liguori the moral theologian, the survival of the natural man. According to this the saint has a Janus-character, looking forward to the eternal last truths and backward to the pride of the intellect, the wisdom of men and the persistent human desire to evade unpleasant obligations. That is not the explanation. The two Liguoris are one and probabilism or aequiprobabilism, though cast in an intellectual form, springs from the passion for souls, the agonizing conviction of the infinite value of every individual soul which lies at the heart of all missionary effort.

Qui suscipit animas sapiens est. The wisdom of the soul-winner is the central fact to which all the rest must be related. Only in the missions, and above all in the confessional, is Liguori really at home. For thirteen years he was a Bishop and the burden of the episcopate was shouldered with regret and abandoned with relief. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the source of an energy that seems at times to pass beyond the natural order. The story of eighteenth-century Naples is not an entirely edifying one. The politico-religious intrigues, the perils from false brethren, the administrative work might well seem too much even for the flame of sanctity to burn. Somehow in this over-crowded and tempestuous life Liguori, who was nearly fifty when he published his first pamphlet, had written the substance of forty or fifty volumes before his death at the age of ninety-one.

They include the *Theologia Moralis*, on which rests the reputation of its author in Victorian England as a teacher of laxity. Is it necessary at this time of day to say that this reputation is the product of a selection which results in distortion? In the preaching and writings of the saint we find him insisting on avoiding the

extremes of indiscreet rigour and laxity, both, as he writes, "capable of leading souls to their destruction." The too indulgent confessor is reprimanded, though nineteenth-century England was not allowed to suspect it, and there is a censure for "the rigid zeal that destroys instead of uplifting." One passage among many may be taken from the Visitation Charges:

Our Lord does not call us to work for His glory by making the yoke of the law heavier than He made it Himself. If laxity is prejudicial to souls, excessive severity is no less fatal. We live in times when to appear as Christians we are expected to speak only of rigour, though very few practise it on themselves. What self-deception! The sharp and bitter spirit that marks these innovators and their Jansenist doctrine does much harm.

So much for the practice of Liguori—excessive severity for himself and excessive laxity, as some will say, for the little ones, who are not to be scandalized or turned away. The elements charged with laxity in Liguori's teaching are intimately related to his zeal for a greater use of the Sacraments, for frequent Communion. A severity which made the conditions of worthy reception too difficult for the faithful resulted in their spiritual starvation, by withholding the sacramental aid which is *in via* the nourishment of sinful souls, not the reward of the perfect.

But Liguori, it will be said, is not simply a practitioner with a variety of medicines adapted to the varying needs of his patients. He is a Doctor of the Church. He is the author of a system, called by some Probabilism and by others Aequiprobabilism which has received the approval of Authority. And it is a doctrine of laxity. The challenge must be accepted. Liguori's doctrine is clearly stated and, in 1871, Pope Pius IX declared him a Doctor of the Church.

A discussion of probabilism and probabilitism is outside the scope of this essay and the competence of its author, but a statement of the problem in its simplest terms will indicate the fashion in which it lends itself to popular exposition and distortion. The subject-matter of the controversy is the lawfulness of action, not its expediency or its excellence. There are cases—in the natural order, questions of life and death, in the supernatural, the validity of Sacraments—in which "Safety first" is clearly the rule. Outside such cases are we bound, in matters uncertain, to adopt the hard

way? Must nasty medicine always be preferred? Or may we do anything for which a case may be or has been made out by a moral theologian, even though it is probably a bad one? These extremes of rigorism and laxity have been condemned by the Church. Between them is a series of gradations in which interpretation is delicate and misrepresentation easy. The views of Liguori seem to have undergone some modification and it is disputed whether his developed doctrine should be defined as probabilism or aequiprobabilism. It may make matters easier for the general reader if we point out that in these discussions, the term "probability" is used as it is by contemporary scientists, not in its more general sense. To the man in the street, a proposition is either probable or improbable—likely or unlikely. In the scientific conception it is found more convenient to regard probability as always existing in some degree from zero to unity, though each of the extremes amounts to certainty.

It is less important to determine the correct theoretical statement of Liguori's position on probabilism than to remember that he is primarily not a theorist, but a pastor. His moral theology is a formulation for the guidance of other pastors who will act, as he did, dealing with each individual penitent by intuition, regulated and controlled, but never wholly determined by textbook rules. If his teaching seems to some to incline towards laxity, they should recall that pastoral practice in his day had to take account of Jansenism as today it is influenced by the "couldn't care less" attitude. In all ages there will be scrupulous and careless individuals and the practice of the confessional is as individual as it is secret. The tone of the pulpit will be influenced by the *zeitgeist* and although the groundwork of moral theology has the same scientific quality as anatomy and physiology, its tendency, like that of text-books of medicine, will reflect the prevailing maladies.

The function of ecclesiastical authority here is regulative. Statements outside the limits of orthodoxy will be condemned. Nothing could be more emphatic than the language of Pope Pius IX in 1871 conferring on St. Alphonsus Liguori the title of Doctor of the Church. It places the orthodoxy of his teaching beyond doubt as his canonization thirty years earlier had confirmed the sanctity—which does not mean perfection or impeccability—of his life. Henceforth there are limits to the permissible

criticism of his teaching, but in relation to any particular problem or any period of human history, all are free to say with Newman: "On this point, I follow others."

To discuss the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori covering more than ninety years in one of the most complicated periods of modern history would require volumes, with a treatment of the relations between the Papacy and the civil powers. The events between the death of the saint and his canonization cannot be adequately discussed without taking account of contingent matters so far apparently removed from the problems of sanctity as the 1830 revolution. The author of the article in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* felt the problem of overcrowding a narrow canvas. I have deliberately turned aside from many fascinating historical aspects of the study and from the confusing details of the schism within the Congregation. What is terribly relevant is that in August 1781, by decree of Pope Pius VI, Alphonsus was cut off for the rest of his life from the Order he had founded.

For the last five years he was to be among those who suffer not only in and for the Church, but through the Church. Mgr. Dechamps, Archbishop of Malines, preaching on the occasion of the decree proclaiming him a Doctor of the Church is later to say that like his Master he was not to descend from the Cross until after his death, nor to find any other peace than that of eternity. For eighteen months after a blow received with perfect submission the saint passes through the experience which his biographers do not hesitate to call the night of the soul.

The difficulty in the differential diagnosis, so to speak, of that supernatural experience from what we should now call psychosomatic conditions simulating it was recognized by St. John of the Cross. He recommended consideration of all cases in the light of the medical knowledge of his century and would do no less in our own when the area of our ignorance—still vastly greater than that of our knowledge—has been slightly reduced.

The prevailing temptation today is to seek the natural explanation even where the supernatural is more probable. The accounts of the saint's experiences in the second half of the year 1784 and the whole of the following year bear the marks of that dereliction and sense of abandonment which the Church recognizes as the bitter reward of eminent sanctity, the testing of souls far advanced in things "which it is not granted to man to utter." On more than

one hundred miracles during the lifetime of the saint, which were attested during the process of canonization, the evidential value of the testimony may be unequal but, unless we hold that "miracles do not happen," the cumulative evidence is irresistible. Miracles, except for those to whom they are deceptions, are not haphazard. They are not examples of the lazy formula that "anything may happen." Any particular case may be debatable and difficult, but just as the trained physician will have a flair for the distinction between the organic and the functional, those experienced in spiritual matters, even if only by reading about them, will learn to detect the aura of the supernatural.

Long before the questions of beatification, canonization and doctorate come to be discussed, we follow the Life of St. Alphonsus Liguori with the conviction that this is the way of the saints marked out with a perfect if undefinable clearness from all other and lesser ways. Natural explanations suggest themselves to the *enfant de son siècle*. Here is an impetuous, eighteenth-century Neapolitan, obstinate, ingenious, prone to quarrel with authority and given to morbid excesses of enthusiasm and compensating depressions. It is all in the text-books, it is all plausible. And it won't do.

On the moral teaching of Liguori, which was the starting-point of my inquiry, I cannot do better than conclude with the words of Mgr. Dechamps:

He abhorred the Jansenist and rigorist doctrines, that laid heavy burdens on the shoulders of men without giving them the means of bearing them. He rejected rigorous doctrines which demand from those who approach the sacraments, the perfections which should be the fruit of receiving them. He would not have opinions converted into rules, recognizing that where consciences are to be bound, the laws must be certain. He taught that observance of the precepts is all that we can strictly demand of men in general, counselling them to higher things and seeking by the example of one's own life to lead them to the summits of virtue. In a word, merciful towards others, he was severe only for himself and for those who by virtue of their sacred calling were obliged, like him, to achieve what St. John Chrysostom calls *animum excelsum*—a life superior to that of the ordinary Christian.

THE ALICES

By

CLAUDE HARRISON

"**A**LL ART," writes Oscar Wilde, "is at once surface and symbol. Those who look below the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril." Wilde's statement applies very well to the Alice books of Lewis Carroll. Written in 1861 and 1872 respectively, they escaped any harsh or undue criticism until about 1936, when the psycho-analysts began to take them in hand. The psycho-analysts looked below the surface and attempted to read the symbols, but the result has not been satisfactory. In the preface to an omnibus American edition called *The Works of Lewis Carroll*, published early in 1937, Alexander Woolcott wrote:

Indeed everything has befallen Alice except the last thing—psycho-analysis. At least the new psychologists have not explored this dream book, nor pawed over the gentle, shrinking celibate who wrote it. . . . They have not embarrassingly compared the Rev. Charles L. Dodgson with the immortal Lewis Carroll, two persons whom he himself never liked to see together.

These words were published in January 1937, but in December 1936, when Mr. Woolcott's preface was no doubt already in print, the *New York Times* published an attack on the Alices from a pen of a Dr. Paul Schilder, who enjoyed the reputation of being one of the best psycho-analysts in the States. Dr. Schilder maintained that the Alices were unsuitable for children. He found that Carroll showed "oral sadistic traits of cannibalism," "enormous anxiety," "fear of being cut to pieces . . . continuous threats to the integrity of the body." Carroll was further accused of "taking liberties with time and language . . . a world of cruelty and anxiety . . . destruction and annihilation." Alexander Woolcott's fears were fully justified: the new psychologists had unmistakably begun to paw over Carroll and his work.

Two writers who on the whole make good use of the psycho-analytic approach to the Alices are Miss Florence Becker Lennon

and Mr. William Empson. Miss Lennon is an American and her book, *Lewis Carroll*,¹ was first published in this country in 1947. She treats her subject with affectionate regard. Mr. Empson's book is *Some Versions of Pastoral*,² and was published in the United States (1938) as *English Pastoral Poetry*. The last chapter is devoted to "Alice in Wonderland—Child as Swain." Empson as critic shows wit and insight, but his writing is often marred by crude suggestions of a Freudian nature and by discreditable remarks concerning Christian belief.

One of the main charges which Mr. Empson brings against Carroll is that of "making romantic love ridiculous by applying it to undesired middle-aged women." This is exactly what W. S. Gilbert does on many occasions in the Savoy operas and Empson here proceeds to link his name with Carroll's, and to accuse Carroll of doing the same thing. In *Trial by Jury*, for example, the struggling young barrister, to further his ambition, is willing to marry

... the rich attorney's
Elderly, ugly daughter. . . .

and having married her and gained a fortune is—soon afterwards—anxious to discard her in favour of a woman attractive and young. What is there in the Alices to show that Carroll makes romantic love ridiculous? Empson to support his case mentions the meeting of Alice and the Duchess during the game of croquet and contends that this episode is really a flirtation scene in disguise. Carroll, who was thirty years old at the time, is supposed to identify himself with Alice, his child-heroine: and hence the Duchess is regarded as trying to seduce a virtuous and unsuspecting young man by wheedling and flattery. The dialogue is quoted as evidence and certain words that are used are given a grossly Freudian meaning. "Pepper" and "mustard" are the symbols, and those who read the symbols do so at their peril. ("How fond she is of finding morals in things!" Alice thought.)

Empson's explanation is ingenious, but an injustice to Carroll. It is psycho-analysis very much misplaced. Empson indeed confirms this by saying: "No doubt Dodgson would be indignant at having this meaning read into his symbols, but the meaning itself, if he had been intending to talk about the matter, is just what he

¹ Cassell and Co., Ltd.

² Chatto and Windus.

would have wished to say." Those who know Carroll's fastidious aversion to any indelicacy in speech or conduct will realize how very indignant he would have been at this distortion of his ideas. It is no less in conflict with Tenniel's illustration. Could anyone, looking at the illustration, take it to represent a flirtation between a middle-aged spinster and a young man? The Duchess, as depicted by Tenniel, is the portrait of Margaretha Maultasch, who lived about 1350, and was reputed to be "The Ugliest Princess in History." Her likeness was sketched by Quentin Matsys, the Dutch painter, and by Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo's drawing is in the Windsor Castle Library.

There is, however, a scene in the beginning of *Through the Looking-Glass* in which romantic love or rather frustrated love, ideal love, is mildly burlesqued. The scene in question is in the garden of Live Flowers and forms the parody of a verse in Tennyson's *Maud*.

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
 She is coming, my dove, my dear:
 She is coming, my life, my fate.
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near,"
 And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear";
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

In this particular episode Alice has just asked the flowers if there were any more people in the garden besides herself.

"There's one other flower in the garden that can move about like you," said the Rose. "I wonder how you do it. . . ."

"Is she like me?" Alice asked eagerly.

"Well, she has the same awkward shape as you," the Rose said: "but she's redder—and her petals are shorter, I think."

"They're done up close, like a dahlia," said the Tiger-lily: "not tumbled about, like yours."

"Does she ever come out here?" asked Alice.

"I dare say you'll see her soon," said the Rose. . . .

"She's coming," cried the Larkspur, "I hear her footstep, thump, thump, along the gravel-walk."

Alice looked round eagerly and found that it was the Red Queen.

The concentrated essence of all governesses, as Carroll himself

says elsewhere. Collingwood, his nephew, in the *Lewis Carroll Picture Book*, quotes Carroll's own account of the Royal Trio—the White Queen, the Red Queen and the Queen of Hearts. And this is what is said of the Red Queen—"The Red Queen I pictured as a Fury, but of another type: her passion must be bold and calm: she must be formal and strict, yet not unkindly: pedantic to the tenth degree, the concentrated essence of all governesses." Formal and pedantic the Red Queen certainly is. "Where do you come from?" she said on first meeting Alice, "and where are you going? Look up, speak nicely and don't twiddle your fingers all the time." Or again: "Speak in French when you can't think of the English—turn out your toes as you walk—and remember who you are."

Why, it may be asked, did Carroll wish to make the Red Queen a typical governess? Some Freudians maintain that Carroll was led to do this because of cynical ideas on the subject of sex. Chastity (they argue) makes a woman ugly and bad-tempered—especially when she is dedicated to a life of self-sacrifice. And these conditions are conspicuous in the career of a Victorian governess. This is the sentiment expressed by Lady Bracknell in Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest*.

LADY BRACKNELL (starting):

Miss Prism. Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

CHASUBLE:

Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

LADY BRACKNELL:

... Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

CHASUBLE (somewhat indignantly):

She is the most cultivated of ladies and the very picture of respectability.

LADY BRACKNELL:

It is obviously the same person. . . .

JACK (interposing):

Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

Needless to say, Carroll did not share Lady Bracknell's opinions regarding governesses; and if, as he says himself, he made the Red Queen a typical governess, it must have been to hold up her pedantry to a gentle ridicule. The Red Queen, as depicted by

Tenniel, is neither ugly nor ill-tempered. She is not beautiful, but her face shows a kindly disposition. She takes great interest in Alice's welfare. Whatever urged Carroll to create the Red Queen, it was certainly not in order to illustrate Freudian problems of sex.

One of the methods of psycho-analysis is to consider the influence of an important publication on the mind subjected to examination. Thus Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859—a couple of years before the composition of *Wonderland*, and Newman's *Apologia* in 1864, before the composition of *Through the Looking-Glass* at the end of 1871. Both books arrested public attention and did apparently affect Carroll's mind and the Alices. The meeting of the British Association in 1860 was held at Oxford, not far from Christ Church: and it was at this meeting that Huxley acted as mouthpiece or "bull-dog" for Darwin, and incidentally delivered his famous rebuff to Samuel Wilberforce. All this must have impressed Carroll very much, for he was in Christ Church at the time; and it was Bishop Wilberforce who had ordained him deacon. Carroll's references to Darwin are not easily discernible, but it does seem fairly clear that much of the beginning of *Wonderland* is a sort of caricature of Darwinian evolutionary processes. The alleged origin of life from the salt sea is suggested by the bath of Alice's tears: Alice and the mouse and the crowd of animals were swimming about in the pool. They all swam to the shore. In order to dry themselves the animals had what they call a Caucus race, in which they all began running when they liked and left off when they liked and all the competitors won. Caucus is a political term and is associated with "democracy." The ideas of democracy are equality and liberty—for the individual and for the tribe or species. On the other hand the Darwinistic idea is the "survival of the fittest" and the "weakest to the wall"—no freedom and no equality. In Carroll's Caucus race all the animals win and are each entitled to a prize. "The subtlety of this," writes Empson, "is that it supports Natural Selection in order to show the absurdity of democracy and supports democracy (or at any rate liberty) to show the absurdity of Natural Selection. The race is not to the swift because idealism will not let it be to the swift." All the animals win and Alice must give them prizes, and as she has a box of comfits in her pocket she gives one comfit to each of the animals. Alice also has won

and she too must get a prize. The animals ask her to give them the "elegant thimble" which she has on her. She does so and they solemnly give the thimble back to her as a prize and as a sign that she should be at once their superior and yet their servant, "for the first shall be last and the last first"; ". . . The highest among you shall be the servant of all. This is a solid piece of symbolism: the politically minded scientists preaching progress through 'selection' and *laissez-faire* are confronted with the full anarchy of Christ."

Doctrinaire "social progress" is again satirized at the beginning of *Through the Looking-Glass*. Alice was told by the Red Queen, "You'll go very quickly through the Third Square, by railway I should think, and you'll find yourself in the Fourth Square in no time." So in the Third Square Alice finds herself in a railway compartment full of animals who are excited about business and machinery (the Industrial Revolution)—and only one man is present, dressed in newspapers—the man who trusts in self-advertisement, who believes in progress through newspapers (the Press) and Reform. It is Disraeli, as is evident from Tenniel's illustration. The Guard looks in at the window and says, "Tickets, please," but Alice has no ticket and all the animals in the compartment try, each in turn, to give her advice what to do. Meanwhile the Guard, viewing Alice by telescope, microscope and opera-glass says at last and very abruptly, "You're travelling the wrong way," and then closes the window. The gentleman dressed in paper (Disraeli) leans forward and whispers in her ear, "Never mind what they all say, my dear, but take a return ticket every time the train stops." Disraeli is the Tory Democrat who believes in Progress and Reform, in taxing the Rich for the benefit of the Poor (in his "Plumbbers' Administration," and thus refuting Marx); and holds that if Progress breaks down the people should take a return ticket to their Conservative starting-point and avoid anything like class-warfare.

Kinship with insanity is manifest in the Alices, for Carroll's own mind was none too stable and he was able to take interest in the vagaries of madness.

"What sort of people live about here?" asked Alice.

"In *that* direction," the Cat said, waving its right paw round, "lives a Hatter: and in *that* direction," waving the other paw, "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."

"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "We're all mad here.
I'm mad. You're mad."

"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.

"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."

In *Wonderland*, besides the Hatter and the March Hare, we have the Cook. She is grotesque and violent, but not exactly mad. It is true that she throws pots and pans about, and that she does not speak (a sinister silence), yet she can "manage" the Duchess and is more than a match for the King when he tries to cross-examine her at the trial of the Knave of Hearts. In *Looking-Glass* the White Knight is mentally very unbalanced. He is mild, chivalrous and kind to Alice in helping her out of the wood: but when not acting as knight-errant, he spends his time in making "gadgets" for any and every emergency. In this capacity he is the inventor ("It's my own invention"), a man of research, the Victorian scientist. The scientist of Victorian days was animated by a faith and devotion to the cause of "truth" which rivalled the self-sacrifice of a religious martyr. However fragmentary might be his contribution to the sum-total of human knowledge, however absurd his basic assumptions (crude materialism, mechanistic evolution, etc.), his sole reward was the assurance that he had carried out his duty to Science. It was Roman Stoicism in a new guise.

"How can you go on talking so quietly, head downwards?" Alice asked as she dragged him out by the feet, and laid him in a heap on the bank.

The Knight looked surprised at the question. "What does it matter where my body happens to be?" he said. "My mind goes on working all the same. In fact, the more head-downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things." "Now the cleverest thing that I ever did," he went on after a pause, "was inventing a new pudding during the meat-course."

The detachment here is heroic. It has been said that the bumble-headed Knight stands for Thomas Huxley. Certainly there is something quixotic in Huxley's devotion to the cause of scientific "truth"—to "absolute veracity" (as he put it)—and in his upside-down theories.

The tendency of Carroll's mind to give expression to the bizarre imaginings of the insane is seen in Tweedledee's tale of the Walrus and the Carpenter. The dimly outlined background

of the story is a vast sea-shore: while the characters themselves and the stark humour of their dialogue are in violent contrast with the sublimity of their surroundings. The effect in the reader's mind is intensified by Tenniel's cartoons which have immortalized the two droll figures. At the very outset of the episode the Walrus and the Carpenter

... wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand.

They were depressed by the thought of so much waste in nature; and wished to sweep away the waste by drastic measures (maids and mops) and to arrange a landscape more tidy and convenient. Carroll, in his subterranean manner appears to be poking fun at the political Progressives who have a mania for improving on nature. Their panacea is summed up in slogans such as the sterilization of the unfit, euthanasia for the old and effete, and other pet notions. So, too, the democratic Walrus and Carpenter were engaged on "charitable work among oysters" and took their little victims for a walk. In Carroll's scheme for the *Looking-Glass* game of chess the Carpenter is said to be a Castle and the Walrus a Bishop (who with sobs and tears of sympathy managed to sort out the largest oysters and to eat them unobserved). Did Carroll foresee a certain Bishop of contemporary England—bubbling over with similar charitable designs?

Another insane dream within a dream—or rather nightmare—is the staging of the banquet at the end of *Looking-Glass*. The raucous voices of the animals shrieking in chorus their mad welcome to Alice as Queen—

Come fill up your glasses with treacle and ink
And anything else that is pleasant to drink,
etc., etc.,

the macabre episodes and dialogue, quickly lead to bedlam and chaos—"... and plates, dishes, guests and candles came crashing down together on the floor."

We must remember that the Alices are dreams. The American writer Edmund Wilson points out that "as studies in dream psychology the Alice books are most remarkable: they do not suffer by comparison with the best serious performances in the field—with Strindberg or Joyce or Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint*

Antoine." In the making of the dreams Carroll used as a foundation a pack of cards in the first case and chess, a game of chess, in the second. The structural support given by these games is reinforced by the nursery (or other) rhymes which are well chosen to give colour and detail to the various happenings. The rhymes (in Empson's phrase) are "fixed, trivial, odd and stirring to the imagination." Then there are the parodies of serious poems (as of Southey, Wordsworth, Dr. Isaac Watts, etc.) which play an important part. Running through the whole movement are the verbal felicities and whimsical logic, the puns ("no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise"), the pantomime characters, as the Duchess, Mock Turtle, the Dormouse and the White Rabbit.

Wonderland and *Looking-Glass* are dream fugues. Walter de la Mare in his essay on the Eighteen Eighties (1932) recognizes this fact in a few beautiful words: "The Alices indeed have the namelessness, the placelessness, and an atmosphere resembling in their own odd fashion . . . the medieval descriptions of Paradise and many of the gem-like Italian pictures of the fifteenth century." This judgment is a great tribute to Carroll's genius, and echoes the concluding testimony of the American Miss Florence B. Lennon, in her *Life of Lewis Carroll*.

The Alice books are inexhaustible like the Fifth Symphony and Botticelli's "Primavera"—the pattern, the rhythm, the flow, the colour, the relation of parts to each other and to the whole, are at the same time so basic and yet so subtly woven that the eye, the ear, the soul never tire of contemplating them. There is a fruitful joy in returning to them after absence, for each new contemplation yields new beauties, new infinities, strengths and subtleties, and—in the single case of *Alice*—new humour.

PHILOSOPHERS ON THE MOVE

ACCORDING TO Professor Ayer's classification of the essays contained in his recently published volume,¹ three are concerned with logic: namely the papers on "Individuals," "The Identity of Indiscernibles," and "Negation." Five deal with problems pertaining to the theory of knowledge; "The Terminology of Sense-data," "Basic Propositions," "Phenomenalism," "Statements about the Past" and "One's Knowledge of other Minds." One paper, "On what there is," is concerned with ontology. And three treat of questions belonging to moral philosophy: "On the Analysis of Moral Judgments," "The Principle of Utility" and "Freedom and Necessity." All the essays have appeared before, either in periodicals or in books, their dates of first publication ranging from 1945 to 1953; but it is certainly useful to have them collected together in one volume. The student who wishes to acquaint himself with the style of philosophizing prevalent in this country will find here a set of carefully thought-out and worded papers by one of its leading exponents. It is only fair, of course, to the prospective reader to warn him that though Professor Ayer writes with admirable clarity the going is by no means always easy. After all, most of the essays were written not only by a philosopher but also for philosophers. They are, in other words, serious pieces of philosophical analysis. But for this very reason they are well worth studying. Professor Ayer believes in philosophy: that is to say, he does not believe that it is the task of the philosopher to show that there are no philosophical propositions and to direct his students to some more rewarding pursuit. And though the reader who expects of a philosopher startling paradoxes or bold speculations about Reality or emotively-coloured pictures of human existence or remedies for our concrete moral and social diseases will be disappointed, he will find careful, balanced and clear examinations of a variety of philosophical questions.

If one takes a broad point of view, it is doubtless true to say that Professor Ayer's philosophical outlook has remained fundamentally the same. He still believes that philosophical problems are capable of being solved by the process of logical analysis and that philosophical problems are in some sense problems of language. He still maintains the principle of verifiability as a methodological principle; and he still wishes to say that ethical statements fall outside the class of propositions. But if one compares the tone of the first edition of *Language, Truth and Logic* with the tone of this volume, one finds, I think, a marked difference. The light-hearted way in which in the first-named

¹ *Philosophical Essays*, by A. J. Ayer (Macmillan 18s).

work the author danced upon the toes of the traditionalists, the metaphysicians and the theologians, a way of acting which scandalized some and delighted others, makes no appearance in this collection of essays. One finds instead a greater seriousness and caution, a greater maturity of judgment and evidence both of a greater readiness to consider other people's points of view and of an appreciation of possible objections against the author's own ideas. Furthermore, when one examines the essays with care one can detect significant detailed developments. Professor Ayer is evidently quite prepared to modify or to change his positions when he thinks that there is good reason for doing so.

Let me take an example. Professor Ayer has reprinted his well-known paper on phenomenism. This theory is first of all represented, as it generally is nowadays, as a theory about propositions rather than about things. To say that a physical object such as a table is a logical construction out of sense-data is not to say that a table is literally composed of sense-data, and still less that the table is a fiction or illusion. It is to say that statements about the table are reducible to or translatable into statements about sense-data. The question arises, however, whether this reduction or translation is in fact possible. The author entertains some doubt about its possibility. Let us suppose that statement X, a statement about the table, is translated into a set of statements, Y, in which only sense-data are mentioned. Either these sense-data are spoken of as enjoying a continuing existence in space or time or they are not so spoken of. In the first case the sense-data seem to function as disguised physical objects. And then the task of translation has not been fulfilled. In the second case X and Y seem to have different "logics." And it is then doubtful whether Y can count as a perfect translation of X. It seems, therefore, that in both cases the programme of reduction or translation cannot be satisfactorily carried out. Does this mean that phenomenism must be abandoned? The author suggests that it can be saved by treating our beliefs about physical objects as constituting a theory, the function of which is to explain the course of our sensory experiences. It may not be possible to rewrite X in the form of Y, so that Y constitutes an exact translation of X; but X will nevertheless function as a means of grouping sense-data. And the task of the phenomenalist will be to show what relations must obtain between sense-data for the demands of the theory to be met. He will ask, to echo Kant, how the physical-object language is possible.

Phenomenism is thus still defended; but though it is clearly put forward as an alternative to the theory of substances, which is regarded as a metaphysical fiction originating in defective linguistic analysis, it is not expounded dogmatically but rather in a cautious and tentative

way, with attention to the difficulties which the theory has to encounter. And a similar caution and absence of dogmatism shows itself in the paper on the theory of the identity of indiscernibles. Professor Ayer rightly observes that the empirical fact, if it is a fact, that we have not found two things which are completely alike is not a philosophically interesting argument in favour of the identity of indiscernibles. The only important philosophical proof of the identity of indiscernibles would be a proof that it is impossible for there to be two indiscernible things, as impossible as it is for there to be a round square. And he gives an argument which appears to be based on phenomenism. If two things do not differ in respect of some predicate, they cannot be distinct things. But he does not express himself dogmatically. "In spite of all that can be urged against it, I am still inclined to hold that the principle of the identity of indiscernibles is necessarily true." And he makes the perhaps significant concession: "It may be that I am unduly suspicious of the category of substance."

Turning to the principle of verifiability, we find Professor Ayer saying in the essay on statements about the past:

If anyone chooses to say, as I once did, that any given statement about a past event is formally equivalent to a set of statements about the favourable evidence that is, or might become, available for it, I do not know how he can be answered except by the production of counter-examples; and these, if he is obstinate, he may refuse to recognize. At the same time, this is not a position that anyone is likely to hold except as the outcome of a philosophical argument; so that we can at least attack it indirectly by exposing the fallacies on which it appears to be based.

And he goes on to assert that "the mistake arises, in the first instance, from an abuse of the principle of verifiability." He does not abandon the principle, but he is quite prepared to admit that his former interpretation and use of the principle need to be modified. Similarly, in the essay on basic propositions the author says: "Now I agree that to know what a sentence means is to know what would make it true. But it would ordinarily be held, and I think with reason, that one could not tell whether it was in fact true unless one already knew what it meant. For otherwise what would it be that one was verifying?" Here Professor Ayer appears to make his own an objection which has not infrequently been urged against the principle of verifiability when rigidly interpreted and used as a criterion of meaning. I am not sure how far he would agree to reducing the principle to the assertion that we do not know the meaning of a statement unless we know what would make it true if it were true. But if the principle is interpreted simply in this way, it seems to lose most of its sting. For how

could we be said to know the meaning of a statement unless we knew what would make it true, at least to the extent of being able to distinguish between the state of affairs if it were true and the state of affairs if it were false? As I have remarked elsewhere, I could not be said to know the meaning of the statement that Jane is a good cook if I thought that it was compatible with Jane habitually serving up food unfit for human consumption. In the paper "On what there is" the author, after saying that "one's ontology is to some extent at least a matter of choice," later remarks that "the only restrictions that I would put upon our choice of predicates is that the making of some observation must count as a test for their being satisfied: for otherwise I do not see how they are to be understood." And this statement recalls the theory of verifiability contained in *Language, Truth and Logic*. But I have already remarked that Professor Ayer's philosophical outlook has remained fundamentally the same. I do not wish to suggest that he has abandoned empiricism. What I do suggest, and I think with reason, is that he has modified some of his positions, that he is more cautious in his exposition of them and that he is more tolerant of other people's point of view. If any reader imagines that I have been trying to give the impression that Professor Ayer is well on his way to becoming a Thomist, he is mistaken. But remaining rigidly fixed in a position of dogmatic "logical positivism" and joining the ranks of the Thomists are not the only two possibilities open to a philosopher.

The author begins his paper on the analysis of moral judgments by quoting a remark which F. P. Ramsey made in 1925, that "most of us would agree that the objectivity of good was a thing we had settled and dismissed with the existence of God. Theology and Absolute Ethics are two famous subjects which we have realized to have no real objects." Professor Ayer's comment is that there are many who still think that these questions have not been settled, and that in the meantime philosophers of Ramsey's persuasion have grown more circumspect. "Theological and ethical statements are no longer stigmatized as false or meaningless. They are merely said to be different from scientific statements." I do not know whether I am right in thinking that I can detect a slightly ironical flavour in this observation. But in any case the author goes on to say: "What this comes to, so far as moral philosophy is concerned, is that ethical statements are *sui generis*; and this may very well be true." As I have already remarked, he still wishes to say that what are called ethical statements are not statements at all. But he admits that this is a strange and unconventional way of speaking and that according to the current use of the English language "it is no doubt correct to say that the moralist does make statements, and, what is more, statements of fact, statements of ethical fact." None the less, these statements, according to the author,

function so differently from other types of statement, that it is advisable either to say that they are not statements or to say that they are statements but that they fall outside the class of "propositions." To say this is not to say that morality is nonsense or that ethical judgments have no desirable function in life: it is to draw attention to a marked peculiarity of ethical judgments. To say what a man's motives were is one thing; to say that they were good or bad is another thing. To say what a man did is to make an empirically verifiable statement; to say that he acted rightly or wrongly is to make a valuational statement which is not empirically verifiable. One can, of course, reply that to say that a man acted wrongly is to say that he acted in a manner contrary to the law of England or incompatible with the teaching of Christ. And these statements can be factual statements, the truth of which can be empirically tested. But in so far as they are purely factual statements they are not ethically interesting. The mere fact that an action is incompatible with observance of the law of England may be of importance in several contexts; but it is of importance from the ethical point of view only if one means that the law of England has a moral claim on us, that obedience to it is a moral duty. And if this is what is meant, the further question is possible, why is obedience to the law morally valuable or why is it a moral duty. Various answers might, of course, be given; but ultimately, if we go on asking questions long enough, we shall arrive at a point where no further answer can be given but where a decision must be made, where one has to decide to commit oneself or not to certain basic moral principles or to a certain set of basic values. Ultimately we come to different "moral attitudes."

As for the moral judgment itself, it may be regarded as expressing the attitude which the reasons given for it are calculated to evoke. To say, as I once did, that these moral judgments are merely expressive of certain feelings, feelings of approval or disapproval, is an over-simplification. The fact is rather that what may be described as moral attitudes consist in certain patterns of behaviour, and that the expression of a moral judgment is an element in the pattern. The moral judgment expresses the attitude in the sense that it contributes to defining it.

Why people adopt this or that moral attitude is not a question which concerns the philosopher who is occupied with the analysis of ethical terms.

It is to be noted that modern empiricism of this sort is much less vulnerable to the critical attacks of the intuitionists than Bentham's utilitarianism was. The intuitionists would say, I think, that by defining right in the way he did Bentham simply turned an ethical term into

something else. He explained by explaining away. But this is also what Professor Ayer says.

By defining "right," in the way that Bentham does, as "conducive to the greatest happiness of the greatest number," one does give it a descriptive meaning; but just for that reason one takes it out of the list of ethical terms. So long as the word "right" keeps its current emotive force, the implication remains that what is right ought to be done, but this by no means follows from Bentham's definition.

The term can retain its distinctively ethical character only if it is not treated as being descriptive. And this is why it is necessary to make a distinction between ethical statements proper and descriptive statements. In other words, empiricism of the type represented by the author tries to retain the peculiar characteristics of ethical terms and ethical judgments, and to this extent it is not exposed to the intuitionist criticism that empiricism treats moral judgments as though they were something else. Indeed, Professor Ayer goes so far as to suggest that he himself and the intuitionists differ not so much in their moral experiences as in their manner of describing those experiences.

Within the narrow field which he has chosen, the field which he calls meta-ethics, Professor Ayer seems to me to occupy a strong, though I certainly should not care to say an unassailable, position. But perhaps my chief difficulty is caused by the doubt whether an adequate analysis of ethical terms and of moral judgments is possible within this narrow field. It is a very unfashionable view, but I am inclined to think that the whole enterprise of an autonomous ethics is mistaken. Professor Ayer might comment, of course, that if we introduce metaphysical considerations they will not help. For either they leave the peculiar character of ethical terms intact or they do not. In the first case the metaphysical considerations are irrelevant to ethical analysis. In the second case the material for analysis is first changed out of recognition, and this procedure cannot be said to facilitate analysis. But are we forced to choose between the irrelevance of metaphysical considerations and their distorting influence? May it not be that the full meaning of ethical terms becomes apparent only when they are seen in a wider setting than that provided by what is called logical or linguistic analysis?

Professor Ayer is most anxious to make it clear that he is saying neither that morals are trivial and unimportant and that people ought not to bother about them nor that whatever anyone says is right is right. The assertion that morals are trivial and unimportant has, he says, no logical connection with his analysis of ethical terms or, in general, with the procedure of showing what people do when they make moral judgments. The assertion is itself a judgment of value, and

it is not one which he either makes or recommends. With regard to the assertion that what anyone thinks right is right, that is not, he maintains, entailed by his theory, and it cannot be held consistently. Suppose (the example is mine) that A thinks that it is right for the State to ban books of a certain type and that B thinks that it is wrong. There is, of course, no inconsistency in my stating the empirical fact that A considers this action right and that B thinks it wrong. But if I say that what A thinks to be right *is* right, I, on the author's theory, range myself on A's side and adhere to his standpoint. And I cannot at the same time adopt the contradictory standpoint or attitude of B. Hence I cannot say that what B thinks wrong *is* wrong. In general, there is no logical connection between a meta-ethical theory or analysis of what it is that people do when they make moral judgments and any set of particular moral judgments. But to say this is not to say that the theory justifies all possible moral judgments. For it has nothing to do with justifying particular moral judgments. In point of fact I cannot make all moral judgments my own. And even if I adopted moral indifferentism, this would be itself a moral attitude which is neither entailed by the meta-ethical theory nor one that is recommended by the author.

Though Professor Ayer does not mention the late Dr. Joad by name, he evidently has in mind the sort of criticism made by the latter in his book on logical positivism, that positivist ethical theory weakens moral convictions and paves the way for ideologies like Fascism by creating a moral vacuum. Dr. Joad's suggestion about Fascism was rather odd. I should have thought that application of the technique of logical analysis would hardly be favourable either to Fascism or to Communism. However, this does not affect the question whether a positivist ethic weakens moral convictions or not. But the question cannot be dealt with unless one first makes it quite clear what the question is. Are we asking whether positivists and their disciples are more immoral than other people? If so, no definite answer can legitimately be given unless it is supported by adequate factual evidence. And if one could show that positivists are in fact less moral than those who are not positivists, we should still have to show that their moral shortcomings were the result of their positivism. These points are made by Professor Ayer, and they are obviously perfectly reasonable and relevant remarks. In any case I am certainly not in possession of sufficient factual knowledge about the moral lives of positivists as compared with those of non-positivists to be able to answer the questions raised. And even if I had the knowledge, I should keep it to myself.

The matter is not, however, as simple as all that. When people say that positivist ethical theory weakens moral convictions or tends to do

so, I imagine that what they mean is often that positivism tends to weaken the religious and moral convictions which they themselves hold. And when they say that it "tends" to weaken these convictions, they do not mean that it necessarily does so but rather that the consistent application of positivist theory would undermine these convictions. We can ask therefore, for example, whether positivism tends to weaken the conviction that there is one universally-binding moral law. Perhaps Professor Ayer would deny that it does, or at least that it necessarily does so, in the sense that there is any logical connection between a positivist meta-ethics and the denial that there is one universal moral law. In fact, "perhaps" is probably too weak a word. For the author, as we have seen, refuses to recognize that there is any necessary logical connection between his meta-ethics and any particular set of concrete moral judgments. But suppose that one believes that no adequate analysis of ethical terms and judgments is possible on the basis of a purely "formal" meta-ethics. Suppose, that is to say, that one believes that analysis of the form of the moral judgment cannot be completely isolated from the establishment of a concrete moral system. In this case adoption of a positivist meta-ethics would, I think, tend to weaken one's conviction about the universally-obligatory character of this system.

I have spoken of "positivist" ethics. But I used this word simply as a convenient label, and I have no wish to press it. When Professor Ayer uses the word on the last page of his essay on the analysis of moral judgments, he puts it in inverted commas. And I do not think that it is really very helpful to carry on philosophical discussion on the party-line basis. The author very properly writes as a philosopher rather than as a "logical positivist." Philosophers do, of course, tend to fall into groups; it would be stupid to deny this. And labels have their practical use. But at the same time we ought to avoid becoming the slaves of our labels. Moreover, besides party-groupings there is also a distinction between philosophers with whom one can "communicate" and those with whom one cannot. As far as I am concerned, Professor Ayer falls within the first class.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON

LIFE WITHOUT FATHER¹

SEEMINGLY THE SAGA attached to the name of Oscar Wilde has run full circle. Genius has risen above prison bars, exile, disparagement, shame and persecution. After a hundred years the birth of the wayward "Lord of Language" and inspirer of the Aesthetic Movement has been duly celebrated as though he had lived and died the most respectable of Victorian writers. Plaques and murals appear in Chelsea. The University of Trinity, Dublin, honoured his memory with an exhibition of manuscripts, an honour which has not yet befallen his much trumpeting and trumpeted tutor Professor Mahaffy who claimed he had made him. Best of all, his son emerging from the shadows has justly described the life of Oscar Wilde's unhappy family when the breadwinner was snatched away and the echo of his name was hushed in the nursery which he had made delightful with his fairy stories and personal imitations of four-footed beasts for the benefit of his sons Cyril and Vyvyan. From the moment that the hideous drama of the final Trial was completed, Oscar Wilde's children were made to change and rewrite their names as Holland. Life, they understood, must henceforth be lived without father.

They were moved from pillar to post, hurried abroad and buried in hotels until their real cognomen was realized and they were pushed elsewhere. The Victorians believed in the Old Testament text whereby children should pay penalty for the sins of the fathers. Mr. Holland experienced the full cup of bitterness possible, but he has written a memoir charitable and without trace of vindictiveness. He has quietly closed the Wilde Saga with a note resembling the *vox humana*.

He cannot help publishing the nauseous and unchristian letter by which Holman Hunt declined to join other artists in lessening Wilde's penalty. Meredith was another, but he did not write in such terms. It would be interesting if more of the answers were printed. It should be added that it was Lord Haldane who secured books and writing material for Wilde. It is well known that Oscar Wilde died a Catholic and received absolution in Paris as well as a Catholic funeral service at St. Germain-des-Prés which could not be blotted out by the ghastly and obscene monument perpetrated on his grave in Père Lachaise by Epstein—a monument which the French authorities had at one time to conceal in parts with tarpaulin. Very different was the gentle spirit of the Irish poet and scholar, of whose genuine faults and foibles Oxford and London made the worst. Of no man could it be more truly said that he was his own enemy.

A great interest of the book is that it is now made possible to judge how close Wilde came to the Catholic Church in his springtide of

¹ *Son of Oscar Wilde*, by Vyvyan Holland (Rupert Hart-Davis 18s).

laughing youth and even what influences led him aside until the last dread moments, when he was not snatching desperately at a spiritual lifebelt, but fulfilling what had once been the desire and ideal of his soul. This is largely possible owing to the new letters published which he wrote in Oxford days to Reginald Harding and William Ward in 1876-78. The old tradition was held in Dublin that Wilde had fallen to a love for Rome and was already contributing to Fr. Russell's *Monthly* when Mahaffy said: "No, Oscar! We will turn you into a pagan instead." This finds more than hints in these letters printed in the appendix. Passages show that he was already following the path of many a devout undergraduate at the time.

Yesterday I heard the Cardinal [Manning] at the Pro-Cathedral preach a charity sermon. He is more fascinating than ever. I feel an impostor and traitor to myself on these occasions and must do something decided.

Of Pusey and Liddon's attitude to the Immaculate Conception: "I think it very strange that they should be so anxious to believe the Blessed Virgin conceived in sin."

I am off to Ireland tonight and intend nipping down to the Oratory for the 3.30 Service. Dunske went off yesterday. He tells me *Lang* is going to become a Catholic. I must know him next term.

Was this *Lang* possibly the future Archbishop or his brother or yet another?

There is abundant evidence that "Dunske" became the late Sir David Hunter-Blair, Abbot of Dunfermline, who made desperate efforts to bring Wilde over to Rome, but there were other influences. Wilde was attracted by Masonry:

in fact would be awfully sorry to have to give it up in case I secede from the Protestant Heresy. I now breakfast with Father Parkinson, go to St. Aloysius and altogether am caught in the fowler's snare, in the wiles of the Scarlet Woman—I may go over in the vac. I have dreams of a visit to Newman, of the holy sacrament in a new Church, and of a quiet and peace afterwards in my soul.

But with boyish frankness he adds: "to go over to Rome would be to sacrifice and give up my two great gods, Money and Ambition."

We cannot learn whether he visited Newman or not:

I am awfully keen for an interview, not to argue, of course, but merely to be in the presence of that divine man. I will send you a long account of it, but perhaps my courage will fail, as I could hardly resist Newman I am afraid.

Perhaps he never went, but in April 1877 he went to Greece with Mahaffy, was a month late for term and, to Mahaffy's indignation, he was fined £45, which the College returned when he took his First in Greats.

W. W. Ward, one of the correspondents, has added a pathetic remembrance of those days. Seemingly Wilde was his most intimate friend, "radiant and humourous, affectionate and natural." He was with him in Rome with Hunter-Blair and Grissell in the spring of 1877:

Oscar Wilde all but embraced Catholicism. He was granted a private audience by Pius IX, wrote him, I think, a sonnet which was graciously accepted: was welcomed in cultivated and interesting Roman society.

But the Fates had spun their fatal web, and Wilde after initial successes with Mrs. Langtry and Sarah Bernhardt (described in the letters) adopted his own philosophy which did not prevent him scoring brilliant success on the stage until the very eve of the crash—and was there ever such a crash from the social heights as the fall of Mayfair's privileged wit into the miseries of Reading Gaol?

The whole Oxford scene can be supported from other sources untapped by the many biographers of Wilde. It is pleasant to read of him in those careless days of youthful rapture. Another contemporary, John Edward Courtenay Bodley, the future confidant of Cardinal Manning, left similar memories. Nearly forty years ago we heard him in anecdotal days describe the good-tempered, far from vicious, undergraduate who was anxious to join the Masonry in which Bodley and Prince Leopold held leading places. Bodley kept a most interesting sheaf of Wilde's letters which have since been mislaid, but here are passages from his diaries which we copied at the time. They perfectly fit the accounts published by Mr. Holland including the Catholic notes. Mr. Holland publishes Walter Pater's first letter to Wilde, which gave the recipient such pleasure, but Bodley always insisted that it was Pater's pseudo-Stoic philosophy which corrupted the susceptible Irishman. On one occasion Bodley found Wilde laying the table for the occasion of Pater's first condescension to lunch. It was probably a turning-point in his career, certainly a turn from Rome. Bodley was turned out as a Philistine.

Whether Wilde became a Mason or not appears in Bodley's diaries:

21 Feb. 1875. Fitz and Wilde breakfasted with me at the Mitre. Called on Williamson where we had a long talk about Masonry. He produced his properties and Wilde was as much struck with

their gorgeousness as he was amazed at the mystery of our conversation.

23 Feb. Acted as Secretary. Grenfell [Lord Desborough] and Wilde were the candidates. At dinner Wilde got very festive: I have heard he said that St. John the Baptist was the founder of this Lodge. I hope we shall emulate his life but not his death. Therefore we ought to keep our heads!

25 May. Wilde and Grenfell raised. A very pleasant dinner. I sat on Prince Leopold's left hand [Duke of Albany].

8 Dec. Wilde came and told me how he is swaying between Romanism and Atheism. He doesn't like being called an Irish Papist.

Friendship never broke between Wilde and Bodley, who later gave a dinner in Paris for him to meet French writers. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* had appeared, and Bodley took him for a walk to warn him that he could not afford the tone of the criticisms. Wilde only laughed fantastically and insisted that the book had produced letters of approbation from the Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury! Those whom the gods wish to destroy they give the gifts of wit and paradox. Bodley met Wilde in Paris after his release from prison. Wilde pretended not to recognize him, but his old friend drew him as far as the threshold of his house where, hearing that a family waited within, the unhappy man turned and fled for ever.

Destruction did not befall his sons even after the death of their mother. They were first sent to school in Germany at Heidelberg. Vyvyan had developed a taste for Catholic services and was sent to the Jesuit College of the Visitation in Monaco. The discipline was not exactly what suits an English schoolboy and he was more happily placed at Stonyhurst, while his brother went to Radley. It is creditable to both schools that they did not flinch from receiving the children of the outcast. "These Italian Jesuits were the gentlest, kindest and most sympathetic body of men that I had so far met in my short life," writes Vyvyan.

An interesting chapter describes Vyvyan's life starting afresh at Hodder under Fr. Francis Cassidy until he left Stonyhurst in 1904 and passed to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. The Jesuits turned out a gentleman, scholar and athlete. While at Stonyhurst in 1900 the Rector sent for him to tell him his father was dead. "But I thought he died long ago." This was a puzzler for Fr. Browne, who added, "No. He died two days ago in Paris. He was received into the Church just before the end. So he is happy now at last."

SHANE LESLIE

REVIEWS

ANGLO-ITALIAN RELATIONS

England and the Italian Renaissance, by J. R. Hale (Faber 21s).

M^{R.} HALE'S STUDY of Italian influence on England from the sixteenth century onwards is destined, if the present writer's reactions be any criterion, to have an erosive effect on many accepted beliefs. It may be that the undoubted influence of Renaissance architects on England is responsible for an exaggerated estimate of Italian influence in general. As one walks down Pall Mall one passes Clubs modelled on the Farnese in Rome, a Venetian palace, and a house designed by Raphael near Florence. Admittedly our attitude to Italy was far friendlier in the nineteenth than in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Mr. Hale writes,

Distrust of the Italian character, fear of Italy's Church and contempt for her political disintegration prevented the Englishman from seeing how great a debt his culture owed to her. While it is difficult to think of a department of social and intellectual life that was uninfluenced by Italian example, it is still harder to find an acknowledgment of it.

In the seventeenth century, Edward White was among the first to show a timid and apologetic interest in the primitives. The Campo Santo at Pisa is described as a "most delightful structure though Gothic," but he preferred the new mosaics to the old in St. Mark's and was disparaging about the Ravenna mosaics. It would not be easy to show that in essentials his taste differed from Addison, who writes of the Gothic cathedral at Siena,

When a man sees the prodigious pains and expense that our forefathers have been at in these barbarous buildings, one cannot but fancy what miracles of Architecture they would have left us had they only been instructed in the right way.

Even in the early decades of the nineteenth century there was no enthusiasm for the primitives. At the sale of William Roscoe's magnificent collection the primitives were unsold or sold for ridiculous prices. As Roscoe's son said, "though highly curious as illustrating the history of art (they) were little interesting to the ordinary collector." The painters whose works were collected by Englishmen on the Grand Tour were Caracci, Gaspar Poussin, Domenichino, Claude Guido and Guercino.

In 1844 the National Gallery was prepared to pay sixteen hundred and twelve hundred guineas for two Guido's, and lost Michelangelo's Madonna and Child because they would not pay more than £250 for it (in 1870 they finally secured it for £20,000).

The book ends with two interesting chapters on Ruskin and on Addington Symonds respectively. Symonds' life-long interest and admiration for the Renaissance was provoked not by any reaction against Gothic architecture, but by what he described as "medieval lies regarding sexual sinfulness." "This dislike of the Middle Ages was, in part, a dislike of the Catholic Church, whose interference with morals he loathed." Mountains might be described as Gothic landscape, for there is as Ruskin says, "a mountain brotherhood between the Cathedral and the Alp," and no man who could write as did Symonds, "As I am prostrated and rendered vacant by scepticism, the Alps are my religion," would have hated Gothic architecture. Mr. Hale could have reinforced his comments on the architectural taste of some seventeenth and eighteenth century travellers by citing their views on mountain scenery. He quotes Bishop Gilbert Burnet's comment on Milan Cathedral, "The Dome hath nothing to commend it of Architecture, it being built in the rude Gothick manner," and this was the same Burnet who travelled extensively in Switzerland without making any comment on the mountains. On the other hand, the feeling for Gothic landscape is almost always allied with a feeling for Gothic art and architecture. Where the newly discovered taste for Gothic was a pose, as in the case of Walpole, the admiration for mountain scenery was equally insincere. One would not expect a profound appreciation of Gothic from a man who could describe it as "magnificent and genteel," or who, as Mr. Hale reminds us, wrote of Cimabue and his successors, "their works are only curious for their antiquity, and not for their excellence," and Walpole, who amused the modish world by his whimsical defence of Gothic architecture, was as self-consciously eccentric in his praise of the Grande Chartreuse. "If I could send you my letter post between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath, you might have some idea of this noble roaring scene."

In Ruskin's case the love for Gothic landscape and Gothic architecture were passionately sincere. I do not think that Mr. Hale has done full justice to Ruskin's immense influence on taste. In Venice Gibbon had dismissed St. Mark's Square as "a large square decorated with the worst architecture I ever saw" (a reference to St. Mark's and the Ducal Palace), and Disraeli agreed with his contempt for "the barbarous although picturesque buildings called the Ducal Palace." And this was the prevailing view when Ruskin wrote *The Stones of Venice*. "The architecture of St. Mark's at Venice," wrote the reviewer in the *Daily*

News, "has from of old been the butt for students, but Mr. Ruskin comes and assures us. . . ."

Mr. Hale has written a book which will delight all those who have something more than a superficial interest in Italian art and architecture. The manner of this book is as attractive as the matter, for Mr. Hale is not only a good scholar but also an accomplished writer.

ARNOLD LUNN

ECCLESIA ANGLICANA

The Church in England, 597-1688, by S. C. Carpenter, D.D. (John Murray 40s).

DR. CARPENTER'S WORK is a sincere attempt to write a just history of the Church of England. His aims are admirable; he intends to satisfy the needs of the victims of examinations; but his main purpose is to show the effect of the Catholic faith on the lives of the English people and his book contains interesting accounts of their religious life. He does not make the history of the church merely the history of an institution. Also, confessing his Anglican bias he avoids offending Catholics and Nonconformists. He does not grudge the title of martyr to the victims of the Elizabethan persecution. Dr. Carpenter does not belong to the dry-as-dust school of historians; diversified too frequently by interesting anecdotes, the book is easy to read.

Readability, interest and courtesy are not, however, the primary requisites of the historian. Less seductive, accuracy and a sense of proportion are. Dr. Carpenter describes Northumbrian culture and early English learning and omits to mention its debt to Celtic Christianity. The Cistercians appear as founded by St. Stephen Harding, inspired by St. Bernard, the builders of abbeys in northern England, great wool-producers, a severe monastic Order. Nothing is said of their contribution to the development of the structure of religious life. Avoidance of excessive stress on institutionalism is welcome; but the candidate who relied on Dr. Carpenter's account of provisions would infallibly be failed. Yet a knowledge of their unedifying history is vital to an understanding of the medieval church. Some attempt is made to discuss the social effect of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist; but of Marriage we are only told that it was relegated to a lower place, "as a thing permitted to imperfect laymen only." Anecdotes, even the lovely story of Bede's death, might well have been omitted to allow for a discussion of these questions.

Inaccuracies mar the book; Theodore of Tarsus was never canonized; Richard I captured Jerusalem; Pope Martin V ruled in 1409; the great social revolution begins in the reign of Henry VII; St. Thomas Aquinas

taught the lawfulness of resistance to unjust rulers at the same time as Stephen Langton was putting the doctrine into practice; and Fr. Holt, Thackeray's Jesuit, is no exaggeration. Much more serious than any of these slips are the startling generalizations. Great precision cannot be demanded of the writer of a large text-book; but to inform the student quite bluntly, that "in due course the people of England learned from the church and its synods to be a parliament" is unfair. On the strength of St. Gregory the Great's words, "When we are hungry it is no crime to eat; yet our being hungry proceeds from the sin of the first man," the Pope is accused of believing all the functions of the body, including eating, partake of the nature of sin. The reasoning is not close. Again "John of Gaunt, being very rich could arrange for many masses"; this is said to be unfair. It is; Catholic theologians, at least, could apply the story of the widow's mite. The Italian Renaissance is dismissed as a revival of Classical scholarship and pagan thinking. True it had its Vallas and its Bembos; but also da Feltre, Ambrogio Traversari and Contarini. Julius II is bracketed with Alexander VI; yet all we are told is that he made war and formed the Holy League against France.

Egregious sentimentality and infelicitous obscurity also mar the book. St. Boniface is one of "the early scions of the breed which later produced Drake and Raleigh." Can Dr. Carpenter mean what he seems to mean when he writes, "the highest and most spiritual thought of the time was very far from having penetrated to the rank and file. How could it? Few of the priests were academically trained"? Neither was St. Catherine of Siena and a host of other saints. Of Margaret Beaufort he writes, "She was singularly well-read, as women then went. Yet she was thoroughly medieval." What does "yet" mean here?

In his treatment of the Reformation, though conspicuously fair and kind to the "new" sect of Roman Catholics, the author merely follows the usual Anglican line. In conclusion it may be said the book is a readable, kind and fair commentary on the story of the English Church; but the major virtues of good history are lacking.

K. M. BOOTH

A STUDY IN INTEGRITY

An Autobiography, by Edwin Muir (Hogarth Press 18s).

IN 1940, under the title of *The Story and the Fable*, this poet and critic recounted the first part of his life. He has now revised and extended his tale by adding some eighty pages, which carry on the reader from the point where Mr. Muir left the country in 1921 to live

in Prague. The chapters immediately following this constitute a sort of Grand Tour, not as the wealthy traveller makes it, but as the man-of-letters was once able to by translating, teaching, and divers other methods for working one's cultural passage.

After he had stayed with his wife in Dresden, Hellerau, Lucca, Florence, and Vienna, he returned to England in 1925; but shortly afterwards went abroad again to reside for a while in the South of France, where he encountered those lost aesthetic souls bent on pursuing "the cult of untrammelled freedom." Later, in Hampstead, he became acquainted with the Communist "fellow-traveller" movement; and his incidental criticism of these two aberrations indicates the measure of his ripe traditional wisdom.

When the war came, Mr. Muir was in Scotland. Service in the Home Guard was exchanged for work in the newly-inaugurated branch of the British Council at Edinburgh. A year after the Allied victory, he returned to Prague as the Director of the British Institute there, followed by a period as Director at Rome. Then, in 1950, he was appointed Warden of Newbattle Abbey College in Midlothian—a seat of adult education, and the only one of its kind in Scotland. And here Mr. Muir closes his report.

Those who read *The Story and the Fable* will remember the vividness with which the Orkney-born author describes his impressions of the Glasgow slums and his fear of poverty in that city. Largely as a tonic counter-charge to this depression, he adopted, during his young manhood, the egoistical philosophy of Nietzsche; and it is the proof of Mr. Muir's rare balance that such inauspicious early years should have led to no warping of character and vision. When better times dawned, Nietzsche was put by; and in 1939, following a dangerous illness of his wife, he found himself one evening reciting "the Lord's Prayer in a loud emphatic voice." As Mr. Muir himself puts it, "Now I realized that, quite without knowing it, I was a Christian, no matter how bad a one."

The paramount temptation ever with the critic, who starts out to write his autobiography, is that of approaching his life as if it were a book sent him for review. Against such trespass of the rational spirit, the poet in Mr. Muir sets a guard. Here, in this well-written, literary life-story, abstraction and anecdote, dream and logic, world and self are poised and blended. A book as healthy and intelligent as this deserves our warm and welcoming attention.

DEREK STANFORD

THE LAST PLAYS

Shakespeare: The Last Phase, by Derek Traversi (Hollis and Carter 21s).

IN HIS INTERPRETATION of Shakespeare's four dramatic romances, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, Mr. Traversi aligns himself with critics of the symbolist school, who, holding that the poet is for all time, argue that the real meaning of the plays can be divined by an analysis of the underlying patterns and poetic symbols rather than by an intensive study of sources, texts, stage conventions, and the tastes of the Elizabethan playgoers. However, Mr. Traversi warns us that the word "symbolism" needs to be scanned with care. "It implies," he asserts, "a prolongation of the normal resources of poetry and drama, and in no sense an abstract imposition on them." Thus the four plays under consideration are neither autobiographical nor allegorical, but they are symbolical in the sense that their images and rhythms clarify character, motive and meaning.

Since the first two acts of *Pericles* are the work of another hand, it would seem that the impact of Shakespeare's art upon this play can be only partial. It is for this reason that Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard deprecates any attempt to use it as a base on which to erect symbolic interpretations of Shakespeare's last plays. However, inasmuch as *Pericles* seems to point in the direction of the other dramatic romances, Mr. Traversi does not overstate his case when he styles the play "an experiment in poetic symbolism." He also assigns an experimental origin to *Cymbeline*, which, although it manifestly conforms to the dramatic type popularized by Beaumont and Fletcher, nevertheless indicates that Shakespeare was "reaching out towards a more ample social content and a more inclusive conception of poetic drama."

In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare passed from the field of experimentation to that of successful achievement. The chapter in which Mr. Traversi deals with the images and the rhythms that underlie the interplay of character and the sequence of events is a masterpiece of perceptive analysis. But even Mr. Traversi is forced to ignore certain episodes which cannot be integrated into the symbolical structure. The fact is that, when an opportunity presented itself for a *coup de théâtre*, Shakespeare did not hesitate to plummet from the rarefied atmosphere of his poetic symbolism to a more earthy plane. An amusing instance occurs in *The Winter's Tale*. After Antigonus exposes the infant Perdita on the desert coast of Bohemia, the stage direction reads: *Exit, pursued by a bear*. The plot demanded that he should disappear utterly, and so the implication is that he is torn to pieces by a bear. Of course Shakespeare disposed of him in this highly unpoetical manner, because the Globe management was able to secure a tame bear, which was trained to pursue the actor across the stage—to the delight of the audience.

Mr. Traversi views *The Tempest* as "a further and logical development in the 'symbolic' technique evolved in the series of Shakespeare's last comedies." He firmly resists the temptation to read an autobiographical significance into Prospero's famous speeches on the evanescence of all earthly things (IV. i) and the abdication of his art (V. i). And yet when the great enchanter breaks his staff, drowns his book, and abjures his "rough magic," may we not hear the voice of the dramatist himself bidding farewell to the poetic symbolism which Mr. Traversi treats so competently in his book? But *The Tempest* is not only a *Vale* to the "rough magic" of creative art; it is also an *Ave* to the infinitely finer magic of forgiveness, repentance and prayer. Prospero abjures his "rough magic," because art, like all finite things, "the great globe itself, yea, all which it inherit," is as transitory as a dream. It is significant that Shakespeare, unlike Ben Jonson, made no attempt to collect, correct and publish his plays.

I. J. SEMPER

SHORTER NOTICES

The People of the Sierra, by J. A. Pitt-Rivers (Weidenfeld and Nicolson 18s).

PROFESSOR E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD says in his Preface that anthropologists have so far taken primitive peoples for their field of study. Dr. Pitt-Rivers claims to apply the same methods when examining a community of three thousand souls—a *pueblo* called Alcalà in Andalusia, as far from primitive as can be desired. He insists that anthropology differs from sociology because, unless we err, the former studies persons, the latter starts from institutions or theories. We ourselves fight shy of these definitions: we do not admit what is said of sociology; and since no *anthropos* is, or can be, merely an individual, but is a person, he starts, and continues to be, as inextricably one of a society. And while this book is packed with interest, all that it tells us seems concerned with the values set on social relationships—courting; marriage; family. The author says (surely rather naïvely?) that "the place of the Church within the social structure is a matter which cannot be ignored," but that he does not intend to discuss religion or motives. But this would be trying to be more superficial than he succeeds in being: thus he examines closely the instinct of, and habits due to, *vergüenza* (akin, we feel, to the Greek *aidōs*). Still, while clericalism and its opposite are distinct from religion, it may indeed be wise for even the most sympathetic foreigner to probe into the Catholic roots of the Spanish soul.

Cheshire, V.C., by Russell Braddon (Evans 12s 6d).

THE SUB-TITLE of this book is *A Study of War and Peace*. It is by an Australian who had been a prisoner of war in Japan, and had a sort of claim to interview Group Captain L. Cheshire, V.C., whose life has hinged, so to say, on his experience over Nagasaki. Mr. Braddon approached him as an "agnostic reporter" about to meet a "religious fanatic." He wanted to write the "war-story of all time," but found instead that his story must be one of Peace; yet his light-hearted sincerity prevents its being either a panegyric or a tract. Cheshire's parents were wisely tolerant of his adolescent escapades: he admits that it was the war that made something of his irresponsible youth. We stand bewildered, maybe, by the unique psychology developed in such men by service in the R.A.F.: at least we are not forced to see them as leaving our earth merely to be "dunged with rotten death," but as passing *in sidera siderii*. The bomb upon Nagasaki transformed, not the man, but his entire outlook, though it was not yet Christianity that he saw. He wanted to preserve, and develop, the comradeship created by the war and during it, but his first colony of self-less collaborators drifted off, leaving him with a house, and nothing else but debts and an ideal. He took two "incurables" into his house: one, a Catholic, died, leaving behind a book—*One Lord, One Faith*. In due course, Cheshire was received into the Church on Christmas Eve, 1948. His first "home," Le Court, then appeared to be doomed—it was sapped by running water—but it is rebuilt. He fell sick and was incarcerated in a sanatorium at Midhurst (by the time this is printed, he hopes to have escaped). Two other "homes" are operating: we can go further than Mr. Braddon, and say that yet another is, God willing, to be opened, at Angmering; and, the greatest adventure of all, a house in India. He has, further, devised a system of buses which provide films, music, and Christian doctrine spoken, first, to his bedside tape-recorder—he has rightly gone through a course of theology. Two of these buses are showing a six-foot photo of the Holy Shroud of Turin, about which, to cope with the shower of correspondence it provokes, he has written a short pamphlet. Mr. Braddon's cheerful book is fond of noting Cheshire's "un-orthodoxies" (not theological, of course!) and his sensible view that rules should be disregarded when they clearly ought to be. As usual, we encounter complementary qualities in this piece of history: first, we can say that the words "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" are never forgotten; they form the solid foundation on which this work for God is based: and secondly, that audacity, also for God, is a great virtue. Recent books have shown that our missionaries have plenty of it: we need more of it within England, and we are glad when a man takes the plunge and does not merely dip a tentative toe into the troubled waters of humanity.

An Elizabethan Recusant House. The Life of the Lady Magdalen, Viscountess Montague, edited by A. C. Southern, Ph.D. (Sands 6s).

FROM THE HOUSE of Dacres of the North came two valiant women who were both pillars of oppressed Catholicism in the reigns of Elizabeth and James: Magdalen Dacres, who married Anthony Browne, Lord Montague, and her niece Anne Dacres, wife to the Blessed Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey. We are fortunate in possessing biographies of them both by their respective chaplains. The *Lives* of Philip and Anne were edited by the Duke of Norfolk in 1857; and now, nearly a century later, Dr. Southern, well known for his *Elizabethan Recusant Prose*, has given us the panegyric of Magdalen, originally written in Latin by Dr. Richard Smith and translated by Dom Cuthbert Fursdon, O.S.B., in 1627.

The panegyric is most valuable as showing the unshaken continuity of Catholic worship in a great house from the reign of Queen Mary to that of James; and there are several interesting anecdotes from Magdalen's girlhood at the court of Queen Mary and from her old age under King James. But as regards the long intervening period of Elizabeth's reign, one must confess to a certain disappointment. The house of her husband, Lord Montague, was the key-stone of the recusant mass-centres in the South Country while maintaining all the dignity of a baronial hall (the noble ruin of Cowdray is a sad reminder of the family's eclipse) and his town-house by London Bridge was an obvious refuge for incoming priests. One would have given much for even the faintest glimpse of the secret activities that went on. But the author, Dr. Smith, did not return to England during Elizabeth's reign, and even after his return showed a strange unawareness of the realities of missionary life. To get a sense of the perils and heroism of that period one must turn to the *Life* of the Countess Anne, which is superior also in another respect.

In both there is the arrangement under the headings of different virtues, but while Smith's panegyric remains somewhat wooden and uninformative, the *Life* by its anonymous author is a golden piece of writing, gracious and vivid as the person whom it portrays. Nevertheless Fr. Fursdon's translation is a solid and dignified bit of work, and, as Dr. Southern notes, "it would seem to be nearly impossible for an English writer to write altogether unsuccessfully in the days when the prose form of the language was in the making."

One might ask tentatively whether "imitate" on page 24, line 4, is a misprint for "intimate."

Mitsinari, by André Dupeyrat; preface by Paul Claudel; translated by Erik and Denyse de Mauny (Staples Press 15s).

RECENTLY WE READ the almost terrifying book by Fr. Buliard about the Mission to the Eskimo; then the tragic book by Fr. Six about the historic mission in Viet-nam; now we have an even more astounding book by Fr. Dupeyrat about his twenty-one years' experience in part of Papua. (*Mitsinari* means "missionary.") These suffice to sting and startle us into realizing that the Church's missionaries are doing, and for long have done, a more than heroic work in dreadful parts of the world. The Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun founded the Papuan mission in 1885; not till 1930 did Fr. Dupeyrat come there, and the breath-taking photo facing page 21 shows, not a maniac war-dance, but the welcome that greeted his reeling senses. He has, fortunately, the gift of laughing at himself in his difficulties; he is, too, an artist, and his translators have served him well when he describes the fantastic forest and mountain scenery of Papua, its waterfalls, and its exquisite bird-life. Chapter Seventeen relates his challenge to the furious sorcerers and his victory over the horrible snakes that they alone could control; and Chapter Twenty-three the martyrdom of Ivolet Keleto, who died for "the Peace of Jesus." "Herico's Operation" reveals not only the superhuman courage of the sufferer and of the priest-surgeon and certainly of the Sister who helped him (for nuns too work in Papua—what has become of French or any other prudery?), but also the amazing power of self-healing in this region utterly ignorant of our hygienic methods. The story of "The Old Man who Waited to be Baptized" involves us in problems of telepathy most easily solved by a direct appeal to angelic guidance; the whole episode of "The Man who Turned into a Cassowary," an apostate, reinforces our conviction that non-human powers can and do operate especially where Mass has not been offered, to the existence of which our scientifically closed-mentality has blinded us. The last chapters of the book, dealing with cannibalism, are almost too ghastly for general reading; yet our world does contain these horrors and priests and nuns are confronting them in the Name of Christ. We should know about them. But we ask for more. Here is a book filled with observation of every kind of fact—anthropological, ethnological, sociological, psychological, brilliantly written indeed and as thrilling as any schoolboy might ask for. But it is not a strict historical record: layers of traditions, and their interactions, are not codified: much that should be preserved in a scientific study is perforce omitted: even, we should wish to know what manner of amalgam of pagan instincts and Christian beliefs maintains itself in these converts. An immense heredity is present: no one will be tempted to call the Papuans "primitive." We need the

Priest, like Fr. Dupeyrat, to be accompanied by the open-minded but trained Student, who will do for these peoples (so near, after all, to Australia) what the Fathers of the Divine Word have done for Central Africa.

Downside By and Large, by Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward 21s).

THE AUTHOR returns to the subject he has most at heart, *captus dulcedine*. He says in his preface that he means to write a life of Downside, not a treatise on Downside. Though the earliest period overseas is briefly described (for Downside as such begins in 1814), it contains many entertaining incidents: thus when Louis XIV "did our fathers the honour to hear Mass in our church," an unknown, but rather reckless, hand placed on his faldstool a document attacking the practice of bestowing benefices *in commendam*. A hand more wise and more adroit withdrew it just in time. Not least interesting is the period which we regard as ending when the First World War began, for that war broke in half so many customs, so much imagination, and indeed so many lives. Dom Hubert excels in his portraiture, in which no false reverence interferes with truth, humour or affection: it is amusing to contrast his picture of Dom Leander Ramsay with Mr. Hillier's sketch in *Leda and the Goose*. We think that Dom Hubert makes good his suggestion that it is a personality which has survived across the ages, more than a tradition which has lasted, for after all traditions can seem destined to endure—grey socks, straw hats, songs—and prove to be but ephemeral. This book is gay, even hilarious; it is full of pungent comments; it is never unkindly. The photographs of leading personages are full of character; the picture of the abbey and school from the south fails, we think, to do justice to the beauty of the former and the extent and variety of the other buildings.

The Young Augustine, by John J. O'Meara (Longmans 21s).

THIS is without doubt a most valuable addition to the voluminous literature dealing with St. Augustine. Professor O'Meara has studied not only the primary sources of Augustine's life up to the time of his conversion, but, it would seem, much if not all of the relevant literature dealing with Augustine. The result is a very complete study of the development of the saint's outlook, both philosophical and religious, from the time of his birth until the scene in the garden.

Given all the investigation of this subject which has been instituted by countless scholars, we can hardly look for new evidence or even fresh interpretations, but the very fullness with which the author

treats the subject-matter is itself illuminating. Certainly for anyone who is more than superficially interested in Augustine this will prove to be a most valuable book, whilst even the reader coming new to the subject will find the book worth while. In places it is not altogether easy to read, but then no book which tried to do justice to the subject could be that.

Beyond the Glass, by Antonia White (Eyre and Spottiswoode 12s 6d).

MISS WHITE continues the story of Clara Batchelor and in this latest instalment manifests the qualities which have earned the praises of the distinguished critics whose names figure on the dust cover. As this particular volume deals very largely with the onset of mental instability and the experiences of her heroine in a mental hospital, it is naturally a little difficult for the normal reader to know whether or not the description is true to life. One feels at times that the author allows her gift for dialogue to encourage her to sacrifice structure to mere conversation, but there is much in the book that is moving, and the writer is undoubtedly caught up into sympathy with her heroine, though some of the other characters are perhaps inclined to look like stock figures.

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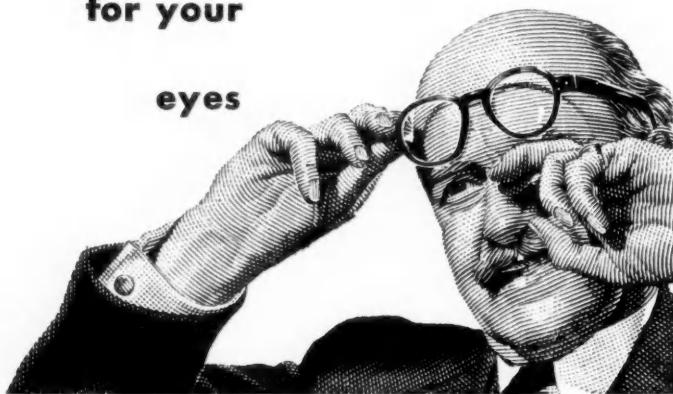
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